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ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "Labyrinth," the magazine published by Little Rock Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles; (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: LABYRINTH

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Mrs. Renee Graw
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INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

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In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44 earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

LABYRINTH '84

Little Rock Central High School

Little Rock, Arkansas

Principal: Everett Hawks

1984 Faculty Advisor: Kay Fish

Current Advisor: Renee Graw

Student Editor: Caitlin Scott

Little Rock Central High School is a three-year public school located in inner-city Little Rock, the largest of the city high schools. The school's 1,725 students come from a wide range of socioeconomic levels. Little Rock Central students have published a literary and arts magazine as Labyrinth since 1970 and as Writer's Rendezvous for over ten years before that. The 1983 edition of Labyrinth received a medalist rating from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, while the 1985 edition received first place.

FORMAT: LABYRINTH

Printed on 60# Carnival "Sky" (pale gray) paper stock, the 1984 issue measures 8 1/2" x 11" and has 44 pages, center stapled. The cover is printed on 65# felt finish Beckett "Watermelon Red" cover stock, and is illustrated with an ink drawing depicting the musculature of a man throwing or reaching for a sphere. The magazine title appears below the illustration in 72 point Fat Shadow typeface. A coated cover stock has been used for subsequent issues.

Within the magazine, text and authors are set in 8 point Helios typeface, titles in 12 point Helios bold, and artists in 8 point Helios italic. In order to print as much work as possible, the staff eliminated the title page, and made full use of both inside covers. The final page is dedicated to a recent Little Rock Central graduate and outstanding member of the community who died in a car accident shortly before the magazine went to press.

Photographs and artwork are used throughout the magazine, and the center spread features a gallery of drawings and paintings. The prose pieces are arranged in three 14-pica width columns per page, with boxed features inserted in some of the prose text.

PRODUCTION: CREATIVE WRITING CLASS

Any seniors in the elective creating writing class are eligible to apply for positions on the Labyrinth staff, by submitting a piece of writing. Several weeks into the year, after the students in the class have become familiar with each other and various talents have surfaced, the class votes to select the magazine editors. In addition to the general editor, editors are selected for lay-out, poetry, prose, and art. A business manager is also selected.

Ms. Graw, the current magazine advisor, notes that the creative writing class has had up to twenty-one students, but that she hopes to reduce that number to sixteen to maintain the quality of instruction. By the time work on the magazine begins, Ms. Graw's role as a teacher in a class diminishes, and she begins to function more as a consultant for the staff members.

Apart from a poem on the dedication page written by Kay Fish, the 1984 advisor, all writing comes from the students. Staff members also complete 50 percent of the editing, and all the artwork, photography, and proofreading. Paste-up work was done by the printer to guarantee printing artwork across the gutter. Ms. Fish noted that although this was more expensive and removed the staff's control of the magazine slightly, it was worth the extra money to have the artwork lined up correctly.

SUBMISSIONS: POETRY WORKSHOP

All students are encouraged to submit works for publication in the magazine by means of ad campaigns, posters, and announcements. Ms. Graw also acknowledges the tremendous support from the English faculty who encourage students to submit. In addition, for three days each year, members of the creative writing class teach poetry workshops to sophomore English classes. Many of the poems in the 1984 edition came from these workshops.

Generally, works from the art classes are culled, next the poetry and prose are selected, and then the final art pieces are selected for publication. During the writing selection process, Ms. Graw gives the staff evaluation guidelines. The literary editor reads aloud those pieces submitted by students not in the creative writing class, while works submitted by class members are read aloud by their respective authors. Staff members then vote on whether to include the work. Occasionally, the staff will recommend revisions to the author of a promising piece, and if the author is agreeable to the changes, the revised piece is

accepted. Ms. Graw retains the power of veto during the voting process.

In addition to poetry, Labyrinth includes short stories, and movie and literary reviews. A local concern that influences life at Little Rock Central is the large number of foreign students. To reflect this influence the staff included a poem in Spanish by a Mexican student, and a prose work chronicling the cultural adventures of a Norwegian exchange student.

Among the suggestions from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association judges, were that students submit more short stories focusing on one main character who changes because of an experience, and that the magazine include more humor. Staff members, however, choose not to make assignments or ask that students submit any particular type of short story because they do not wish to dictate what students should write. They select only from the materials submitted.

FUNDING: PUBLICATION FEE

The staff receives approximately $1,000 of its funds from the school budget, with another $1,000 from advance sales of the magazine. At the beginning of each year, students who so wish pay a publications fee of approximately $28.00 to receive the school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine. The magazine budget receives $1.00 from each fee paid. Donations from magazine patrons solicited by letters from the business manager provide approximately $700, while single copy sales account for another $50. Expenses run from $2,500 to $2,800.

The staff produces the magazine at a cost of approximately $3.00 per copy for a print run of 750, and sells it at $2.00 per copy. The cost of commercial paste-up for the 1984 edition increased expenses somewhat beyond those for previous issues.

PROBLEMS: ANONYMITY

Ms. Graw admits that having submissions read aloud poses a problem with anonymity for students in the creative writing class. Some are reluctant to read their works aloud in front of the staff. Even if the literary editor reads the work, if it is one the author has been working on in the class workshops the students know who the author is, which makes voting awkward. Although she does not yet have a solution to this problem short of eliminating the reading altogether, she does plan to make some changes in the procedure to keep the voting unbiased while still allowing staff members to hear the works aloud.

The 1984 issue was the last for Ms. Fish. Her successor, Ms. Graw, did not collaborate with her prior to taking over the advisor's duties, and has completed only two issues. The success of these issues in competitions held by Columbia Scholastic Press Association and the National Council of Teachers of English suggest that the transition has been a smooth one, and that Labyrinth will continue its tradition of high literary and design quality developed under the direction of its previous advisor.

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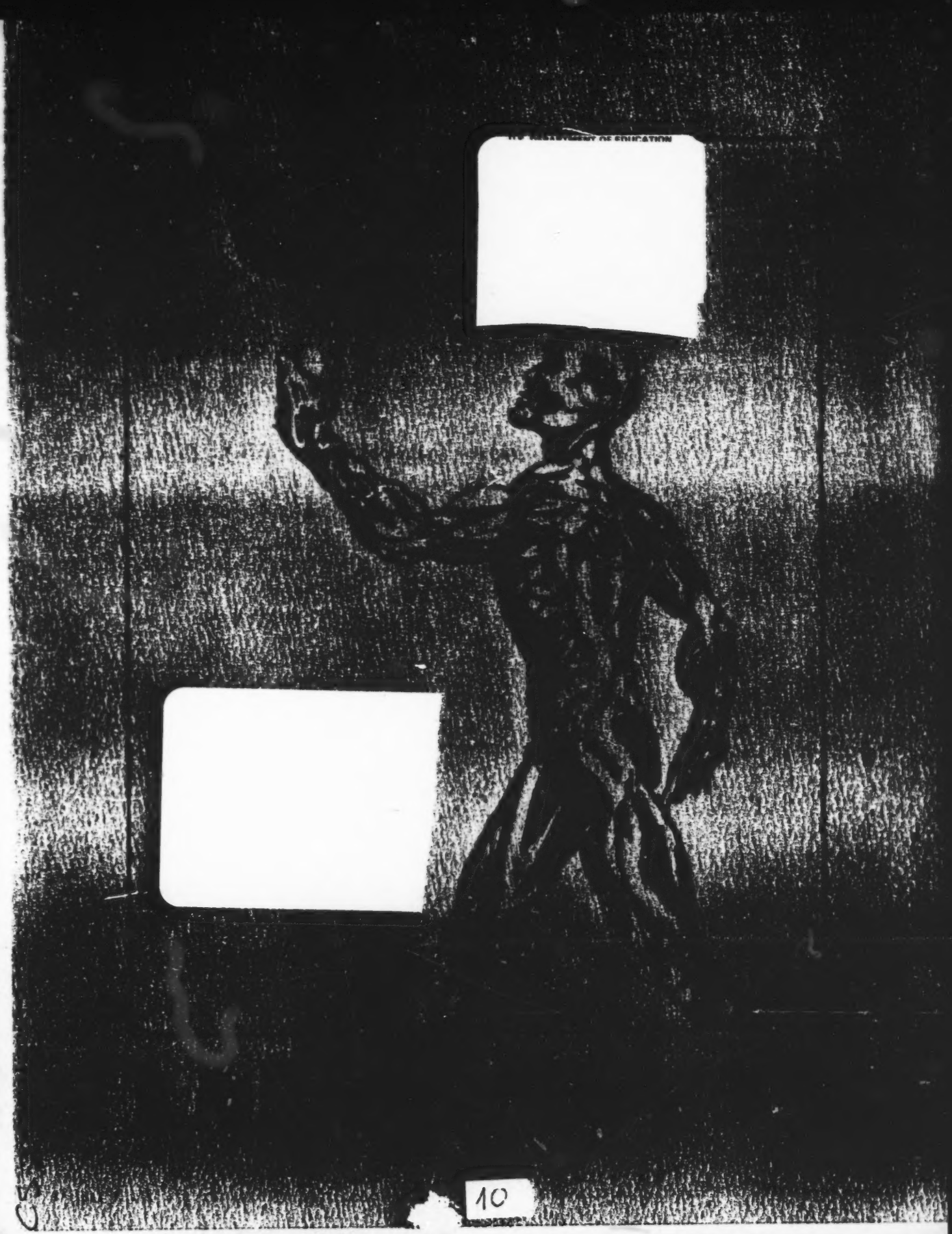
Copies of Labyrinth may be obtained from

Little Rock Central High School

14th and Park Streets

Little Rock, AR 72202

Cost: $2.35 (includes postage)



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Meredith Matthews

Staff

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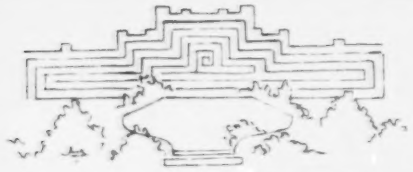

LABYRINTH '84

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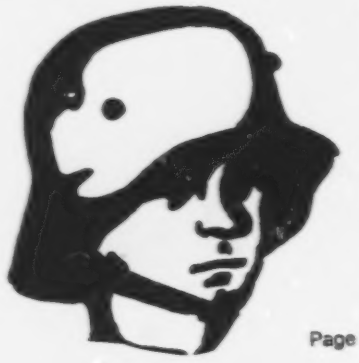

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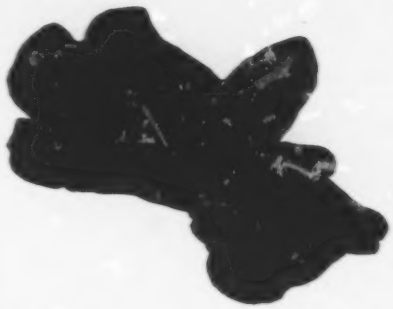

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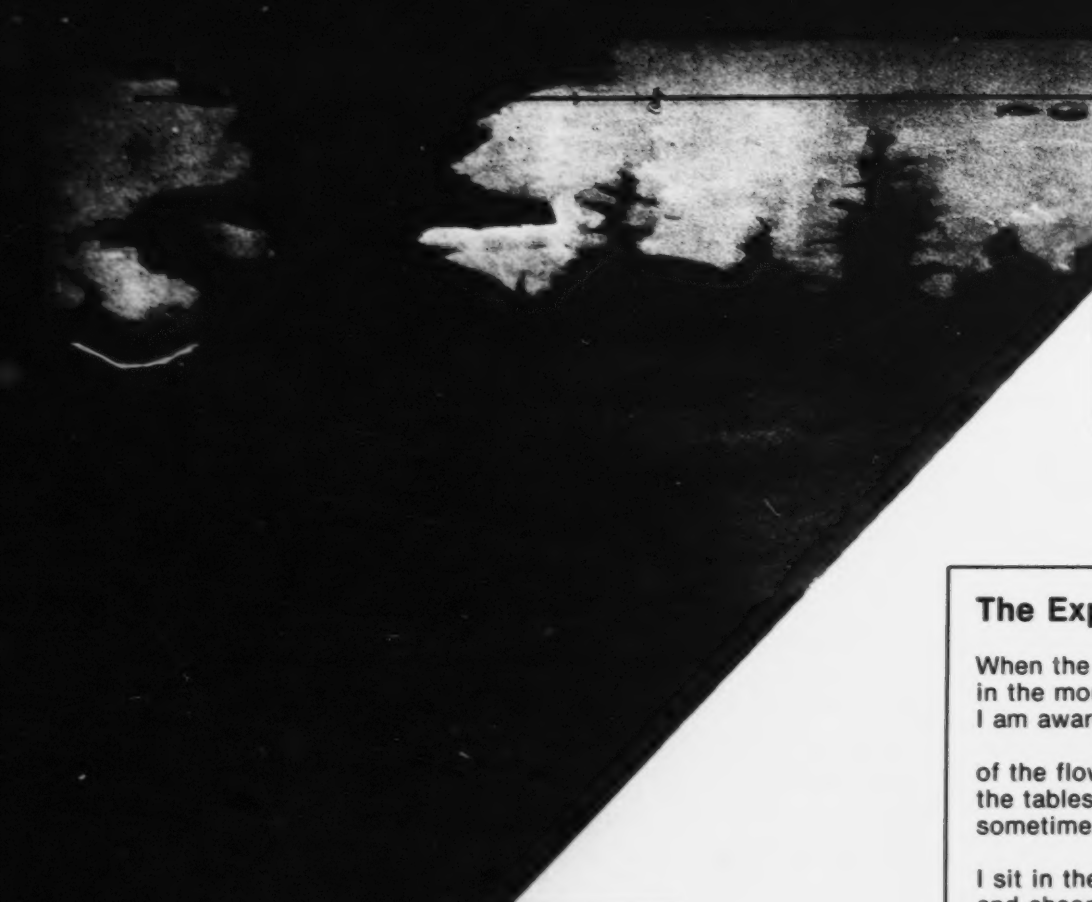


Night Shades

Sunsets
Linger
Like Children begging
For a few more minutes
Before bedtime.

—Kelly Holt

The Explosion of The Sun

When the sun explodes
in the morning
I am aware

of the flowers and plants,
the tables, the chairs,
sometimes the ants.

I sit in the sun
and absorb the explosion,
I think of the world
as it turns on its axis,

I feel its rotations
only in the morning
in the explosion of the sun.

—Cindy Fiser

...ght
...licker out
...each morsel
...ws of Fairy Fire
...e canyon walls
...ght.

...music whines from
...e trees
...ries jump, hop, scramble,
Dance around the fire that burns
higher and higher
As if to touch the sky and melt the
stars into one great Fairy Eye
White with sparks of violet and
green jumping, snapping
Crackling out to charge the atmosphere.

The Fairy dance etches itself on
the canyon wall
Leaving trails of hatred and
sorrow
Like snail-slime
Slithering along the cracks.
They stop, cock their heads
Suddenly aware of the quiet,
Squat and pray,
Put out the fire,
And leave my dreams to me.

—Monique Clark

2 A.M.

I walk quickly up the forest path,
Stumble down a hill, then stop.
The wind is gone, the air suspended.
Ice covered aspens stand,
Photographs of live wood under moonlight.
Above the icy branches
Snow like light-crazed moths twists
And flutters throught the fullmoon.
I hear whispers as it
Brushes brittle pine needles.

—Doug Griep

Morning Voices

I. Each morning I pause like a drowned man
I float on the surface of sleep,
Slowly the waves of my thoughts calm and solidify.
The bedsheets are cold. I turn over
To replay my dreams on the inside of my eyelids
Until someone tugs at my shoulder.
My feet thump dully on the floor.

II. When I waken in the morning
I lift myself up
Starting with my very insides and moving out
'Till my arms push back the blankets and reach
High above my head to pull the heavens down.
I tighten my muscles,
and blink my eyes to see.

III. An alarm clock stabs me from my sleep each morning.
The day descends like bricks,
I stumble to my cold tile bathroom,
My knees give. My fingers tremble.
The mirror hangs
Too painful for my eyes.
I cut myself when I shave.

Every night our beds spin eastward toward the fire,
We rise to find our windows pouring light
And our life-blood smeared across the clouds.

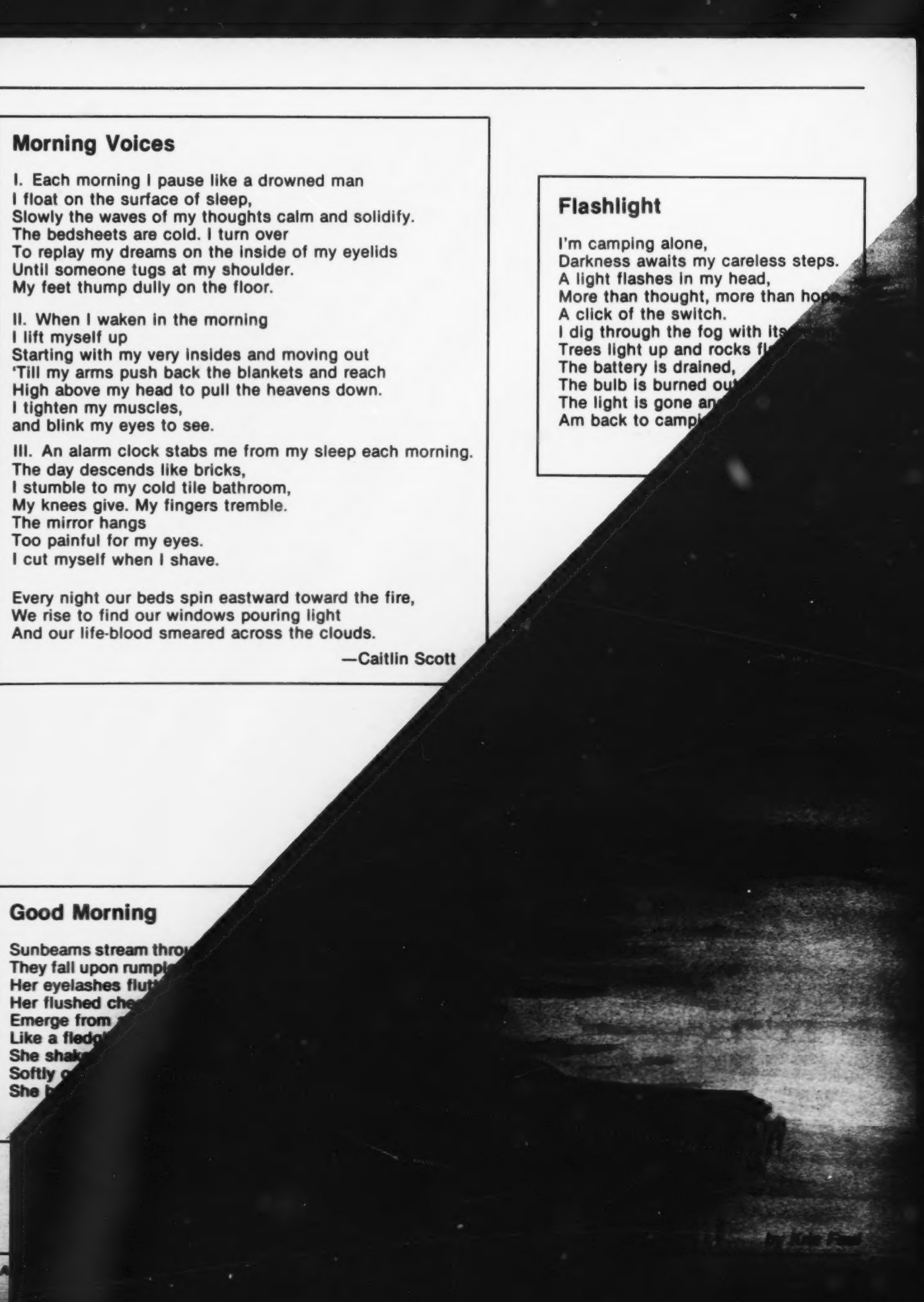
—Caitlin Scott

Flashlight

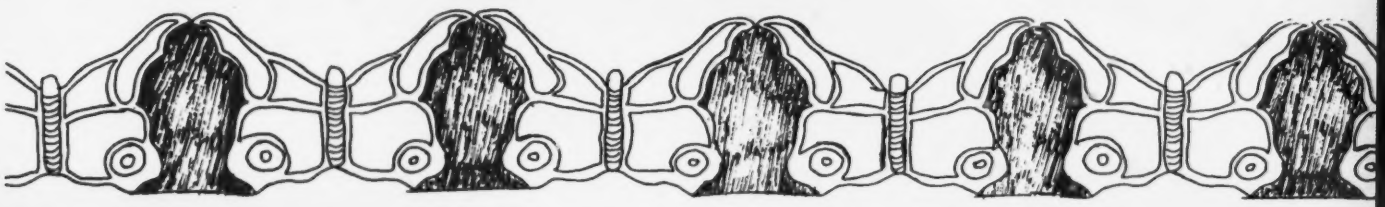
I'm camping alone,
Darkness awaits my careless steps.
A light flashes in my head,
More than thought, more than hop
A click of the switch.
I dig through the fog with its
Trees light up and rocks fl
The battery is drained,
The bulb is burned ou
The light is gone an
Am back to campl

Good Morning

Sunbeams stream thro
They fall upon rumpl
Her eyelashes flut
Her flushed che
Emerge from
Like a fledg
She shak
Softly
She



by Kate Fuss



Patterns

—Caitlin Scott

His shout slurred in the dance music, "Hey, Chris, if you're gonna be my girl, you're not dancing with anyone but me." She thought he was kidding, of course. This was only their second date, and she was having a wonderful time dancing at the party. She whirled around making her skirt fly out in a circle. Her heart was beating, and the air was hot. She didn't even see his expression. He hit her in the face with a beer bottle.

In the subway she kept seeing that scene instead of the ads on the walls of the car. The posters and red graffiti blurred beneath her memory of laughter, music, and dull brown bottles. She shivered and pushed it all away. Through the dirty black window she felt the cold coming in. She was numb. She hated subways. But she didn't have enough money for a taxi, she was sixteen, and the only place to go was home. Home was like a dead weight. She didn't want to think about what she would face there. She closed her eyes.

"She's bleeding," the whispers hovered in the rumble of the subway. Half asleep, her hand went involuntarily to the cuts on her mouth and chin. They felt thick and sticky under her fingers.

She had come home bleeding once before when she was seven. She had been riding a skateboard and her parents had told her not to.

"Just don't tell them," her friends had said. "Say you fell down the back steps."

All the way home she was more afraid than hurt, afraid of her Mother's tight, angry face, her angry words beating down loud and fast, and her certain question: How did it happen, Christy? Christy, how? . . . She thought about how her knees bent as she walked, how they stretched her raw flesh, how the dirt in the wound stung. She stood for a long time on the back porch, warm blood trickling from her elbows and knees. Just as she was about to go inside, her mother opened the door and stepped out.

"Christy. I was about to call you to come . . . Oh, my God!" her mouth contorted. "Oh, dear God. What have you done to yourself? How could you?!" She gasped in her high-pitched voice, pressing her daughter's head hard against herself and forcing back her own tears. The daring little girl, the stupid little girl, all hurt, all mangled, how could she have done that to herself. She picked up her daughter, carried her inside, and set her on the kitchen counter.

After the rubbing alcohol and bandages, her mother's face grew calm and serious, "Tell me honestly now, Christy, how did you hurt yourself?" Christy thought about what they had told her to say about the back steps. But her mother was looking at her and holding her hands. She took a deep breath, "I was riding skateboards with Jenny and Mark, and I was going fast and it was scary and I fell off and . . ."

Her mother sighed, "You idiot. You silly little idiot. You'll have to stay in your room the rest of the day." Her mother helped her off the counter. She didn't mind staying in her room, and at least her mother wasn't yelling.

"When Daddy comes home," her mother warned from the kitchen doorway as Christy trudged up the stairs, "He'll be angry."

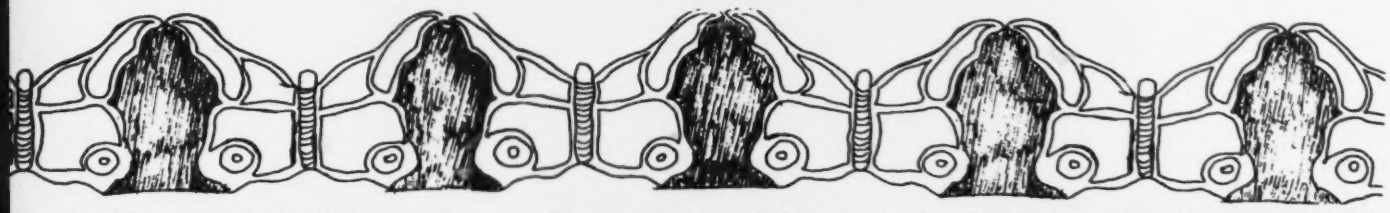
They would both be angry soon. She flinched as she sat on the cold subway seat. It would be late and they'd see her blood and they'd let their voices get louder and louder and shake her shoulders.

The car stopped for a moment. She looked at her watch: 1:15. Twenty minutes from her house. Maybe they wouldn't be up. The blood on her hand was still red. She closed her eyes not to see. No one had ever hit her before.

She had seen her father hit her mother once. It was the summer after she turned thirteen, just after her mother's first bout of bronchitis. She and her mother were sitting up late talking about her friends at school. Her mother was smoking, coughing a little, and hiding the ashes in a styrofoam cup. Somehow they didn't hear her father's footsteps. Without warning he flung open the kitchen door, took two steps, and hit his wife in the face with the palm of his hand. The cigarette went flying. Christy screamed.

"I knew I heard you coughing," he growled, his face redder than the mark on his wife's cheek. "Stop doing this to yourself. Stop tearing up your lungs. All right?" He took a step toward her, "Well?"

Her mouth opened, but she didn't say a thing, just stared at him and started to sob. Then he began crying too and knelt by her chair and



held her and said, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry," until her sobs were quieter and she said.

"No, I'm sorry."

"No, It's my fault. I'm sorry."

She sighed a little and looked up from his shoulder. Her red puffy eyes found her daughter pressed into the farthest corner of the room. She stared at them with her mouth hanging open.

"It's all right Christy. Poor baby. Don't be afraid. Come here." Christy ran to them and held on as if she could protect them.

She never saw that happen again, but she was always afraid that it would. She knew her mother smoked sometimes in secret.

"Patterns go on like that," she thought, "like my momma and like the click of the cars as they go through the tunnels."

She opened her eyes. A lady in a fake leather jacket was sitting across from her. She blinked. The woman's hair stood out from her head in pink clumps. When the woman saw that Christy was awake, her eyes moved away from her face. She looked rich, but she was beaten and bleeding. There was a chance, that the girl's face might hurt the way her own empty stomach hurt, the way her own heart hurt every time she moved.

Christy's chin and mouth did hurt. She stared across the aisle at the woman in leather. What could she be thinking? What conclusions could that woman reach about her swollen face and round velvet shirt? The woman turned her head and appeared to sleep. What would her mamma and daddy think of her now? Only three weeks ago they had grounded her for coming home drunk.

Three of her girlfriends had brought her home. They had made their way giggling to the front door, where they must have spent five minutes trying to unlock the door. When her father finally swung it open, he took one look at her and was furious. His ruddy face twisted with anger and disgust.

He pulled her into the house. "I know what you've been doing. You reek of it. Don't you have any self-respect?" He shook her shoulders and screamed into her face. He'd make her understand. "Do you want to become one of those goddamn alcoholic bums sleeping in newspapers? Is that it? Do you want to be eating from other people's garbage cans when you're thirty?"

By that time she was cold sober. She stared into his face so like his own and said, "No, I don't and I didn't mean to make myself drunk." She watched him strike his forehead with his hand. She knew he didn't believe her. He never believed her, and it wasn't always her fault.

"That's why you drank it all, right?" He grew calmer and just looked at her. She was so like her mother, her face turned up to his in the dim light, her eyes hard, stubborn, her thin mouth painted across her face. Finally, he shook his head. It would all wait until morning. "Just go to bed."

Later, her mother had opened the door to her bedroom. A thin strand of light fell across the floor. She could see her mother's figure silhouetted in the doorway and hear her voice, "Chris, if you need to be sick tonight, you just come wake me up."

The subway lurched. Christy had the horrible feeling she needed to be sick now. Her stop was next, and she was almost home. She stood up to go. The woman across from her stood up, too. She couldn't imagine where the woman could be going in their neighborhood of tall apartment buildings and insurance offices. She glanced back at the woman following her up the empty row of seats, swaying weakly on her high-heeled black boots. As she neared the doors, the woman reached out and touched her arm. Chris drew away.

"I'm sorry," the woman's voice came out softly. She felt her ankles threatening to give way inside her boots. There was a chance. "I need money. I haven't eaten in days."

The woman's face looked pale beneath the make-up. "Will you use it to buy something to eat?" Chris managed to ask without moving her bottom lip. She never remembered being hungry, but her stomach hurt now. She just wanted to get off the subway.

"I need money," the woman repeated. The subway stopped and the doors opened. She watched the girl reach into her purse and take out a few dollar bills and some coins. She didn't say thanks. Chris watched her walk down the platform and fall into a seat to sleep again. Chris turned to leave, to go home. Only four quiet blocks, and she faced her front door.

The key turned silently in her hand. She opened the door and crept through the house. Just as she was about to go upstairs, she noticed a single point of red light through the kitchen door.

"Chris?"

"Momma," she whispered.

She could smell the smoke. "I know. I'm going to be sick now. Good-

by Wayne Depriest

night." It would all wait until morning.

"You sound funny, Chris. Are you okay?" She couldn't answer her mother. "Come in here. I'll get the light."

"No, Momma. Don't bother."

"But you always were the one afraid of the dark." The light blinked on. They stared at each other's faces bathed in light, hers with a cigarette hanging from the corner of her mouth, her dauther's with her lip and chin swelling. Chris felt her stomach twist like a wet towel. A plate full of ashes and cigarette butts lay on the table.

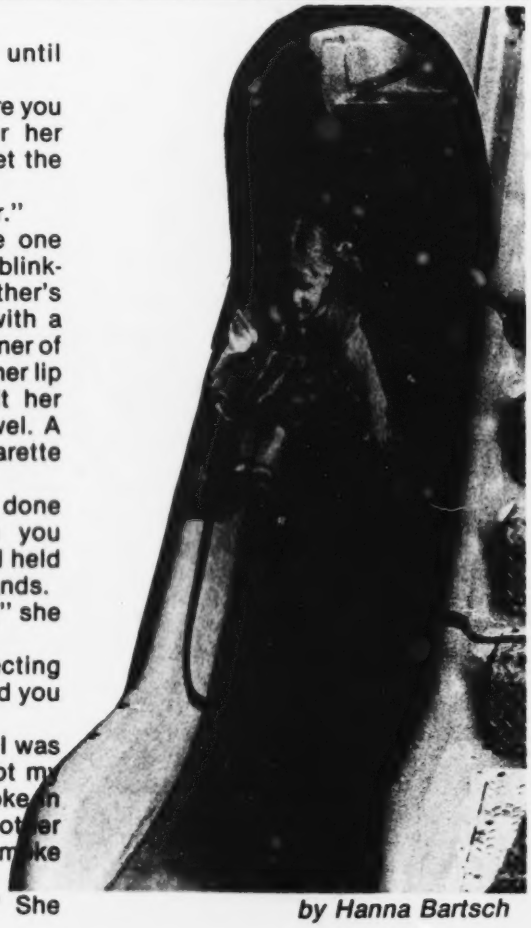
"Oh, Chris. What have you done to your face? Where have you been?" She moved closer and held her daughter's face in her hands.

"The guy I was with hit me," she stammered.

The mother was still inspecting her daughter's face. "What did you do to make him do that?"

"It's not my fault, Momma. I was only dancing. Everything's not my fault. And you're getting smoke in my face." She pushed her mother away. "You're always getting smoke in my face."

"Well, I'm terribly sorry!" She crushed her cigarette into the plate. "But who are you to talk anyway. You go to those wild parties and get yourself beaten up. You're no different. You're tearing yourself up. You're bleeding."



by Hanna Bartsch

Neither of them said anything for a while. Chris went to the sink and washed her face with warm water and soap that stung. When she turned around her mother was watching her.

"You're still mad at me, Momma?" Her skin felt looser now that she's cleaned it. The mother looked at her daughter and then at her own hands. They were wrinkled now. But she had stopped thinking about how old she was getting, had stopped counting the cigarettes. She was even trying to stop worrying about Chris, just let the days slip by. What happens, happens, "No, I understand, better than you understand me. But Chris," she said, reaching for another cigarette, "Don't go to those parties anymore."

Chris shuddered, "Maybe this time," she thought, looking at her mother's head in the cloud of smoke, "There's a chance, I'm hurt enough to change."

The Marion Hotel

—Jeff Warren

"'There she goes,'" sighed a member of The Little Rock Club as he and dozens of other members watched from atop the Union National Bank Building while the majestic Marion Hotel caved in on itself. This scene was noted by *Arkansas Gazette* reporter Bill Lewis, who recorded the reaction in his article "Little Rock Hotel's Passing Saluted by Tenacious Few at Club." (18 Feb. 1980). The destruction of The Marion Hotel marked not only the death of a famous landmark but the end of a political forum as well.

Opened on January 9, 1907, the Marion was named for the wife of one of the chief stockholders, Herman Kahn. George R. Brown, who briefly owned the *Gazette,* had a dream of making Center Street the main thoroughfare through Little Rock with the Old State House at one end and the Governor's Mansion at the other; his dream, like many others, was shattered by the Great Depression.

In an *Arkansas Gazette* article marking the Marion's fiftieth anniversary in 1957, Ernest Valachovic noted that the hotel had originally cost $250,000. Incorporating 175 rooms in six stories, it celebrated its Grand Opening with an orchestra playing in the lobby and visitors crowding in to see the new building first hand.

The atmosphere created at the Marion was definitely high class, as Mike Trimble's account confirms. The lobby was tastefully decorated in Georgia marble and housed a much enjoyed frog pond: "'I remember those little kids, they used to try to pet the frogs,'" and observer said, "'and pretty soon, POW! They'd have mamas and bellboys and everybody else trying to fish that kid out of the pond. I used to love to watch that.'" The lobby was also a home for a handful of regular "lounge guests" who met to report and to see who was in town. Ben Shelly, former manager of the hotel, would send them cards suggesting that the lobby chairs were for guests, but they would hand the cards back in annoyed refusal. The Greenroom became famous for its Southern style cooking and attracted a good portion of the "church crowd" on Sundays, while the Coffee Shop was a gathering place at all hours of the day and night. (26 March 1970)

"Anybody who was anybody got down to the Marion every now and then," Joseph Sitlington declared in

"The Marion: Memories of the Old Gal's Life." (17 Feb. 1980) These "anybodies" included President Theodore R. Roosevelt, President Harry Truman, Will Rogers, Helen Keller, and Charles Lindbergh. Major social events at the Marion included the Debutante Ball and Little Rock Junior Cotillion. Gaston Saux, former manager of the hotel, instituted Tea Dances every Sunday afternoon during the 1930's. Another socially significant event was underway routinely by about 10 p.m. as ladies of the evening began to arrive by cab. "As they hurried by the front steps, two very slight nods by one of the bell captain's lieutenants would signal them that all was well and it would be business as usual upstairs."

The Marion was the convention center of Arkansas for decades and was headquarters for such organizations as the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, and the Civitans Club. It was deemed the "other capitol" because of the political dealings that occurred there.

In a personal interview Mrs. Joseph Sitlington described the Marion as a natural for anything from conventions to election headquarters because of its abundance of office space, sleeping capacity, and the convenience of the Green Room and Coffee Shop. Other hotels could not compete because they were too small or because they were rundown. Another reason for its political importance was that most of the politicians and leaders lived nearby.

Candidates who used the Marion as campaign headquarters ranged from Senator J. William Fulbright and Governor Winthrop P. Rockefeller to a candidate for county office who sat in the lobby and passed out vegetables to gain votes. One very wealthy candidate, convinced that campaign headquarters at the Marion was mandatory for success, offered to buy the hotel when he was told that there was no available space for him.

Before the days of the state legislative council, the Marion was traditionally the home away from home and most Arkansas legislators. A "lobby guest" regular told Trimble of how state officials would bribe state officials to spot lobbyists entering the hotel and to report back which of their associates the lobbyists had visited. "'That's how they kept track of who was on the take,'" he said. "'The going rate for a scout like that was $10.00 a night.'"

Another "lobby guest" said that the slickest political move he had ever seen at the Marion was during the 1965 Young Democratic Club's Convention when the faction led by Sam Boyce of Newport outmaneuvered the faction that was loyal to former Governor Orval E. Faubus. Trimble reported an eyewitness account: "'The Crucial session was about 2 p.m. and the Boyce faction assembled in the basement meeting room ahead of time. They blocked the stairs with their partisans and influenced the elevators to stay off the basement floor, and by the time the Faubus faction had managed to make its way downstairs, the Boyce slate of officers had already been elected.'"

The Marion was closed on May 1, 1970. "'The Marion is a victim increasing costs, changing times, and an exodus of business from downtown.'" Houston J. Burford, owner of the hotel at the time, explained in Jimmy Jones' *Gazette* report "Little Rock Hotel Marion, Victim of Change." (26 March 1970)

Supporters of the Marion urged restoration. In a letter to the editor in the *Gazette,* one citizen wanted to preserve it so that the state legislature could continue to function. He pointed out, "With statesmen scattered all over town in various hostelries, and with no central, socialable meeting place, the business of governance simply does not get done with anything like the ease that prevailed when they were all in a covey at the bountiful Marion." (19 April 1976)

As thousands watched, progress destroyed the Marion at 10:41 a.m. on February 18, 1980, to make way for a new hotel and convention center. (Lewis, 18 Feb. 1980) Mrs. Joseph Sitlington said, "You always had a special feeling walking into the Marion; it had an air, even when it was old and tired. It never occurred to any of us that it would be torn down."

Today, the modern twenty-story Excelsior Hotel has risen like a Phoenix from the ashes of the Marion. With today's businessmen and politicians using telecommunication devices to hold conferences as well as airline transportation to shorten business trips, there is no longer a need for the smoke-filled backrooms fo the Marion.

by Hanna Bartsch

Cemetery

The land is flat as far as my eyes can see
Gray-white crosses spring from the earth like wheat.
Perfect straight rows stand ready for harvest.
But no one visits them anymore.
Men crucified for the beliefs of a Nation,
All that is left is a cross, unattended.
Weeds growing, unchecked
Entwine the rotting wood crosses
To drag them back beneath the ground.

—Chuck Hanson

Man Is Superior

Man is superior
Is that what we say?
The ultimate product
Of God, to this day

King of the jungle
Or so it might seem.
A King of our sort
God did not deem,

Supreme race is power,
Our era is blown,
It's time for another
To sit at the throne.

Death and destruction
By our own hand,
Only to leave
The burned barren land.

Man is superior
Is that what we said?
Quite irrelevant,
Now that we're dead.

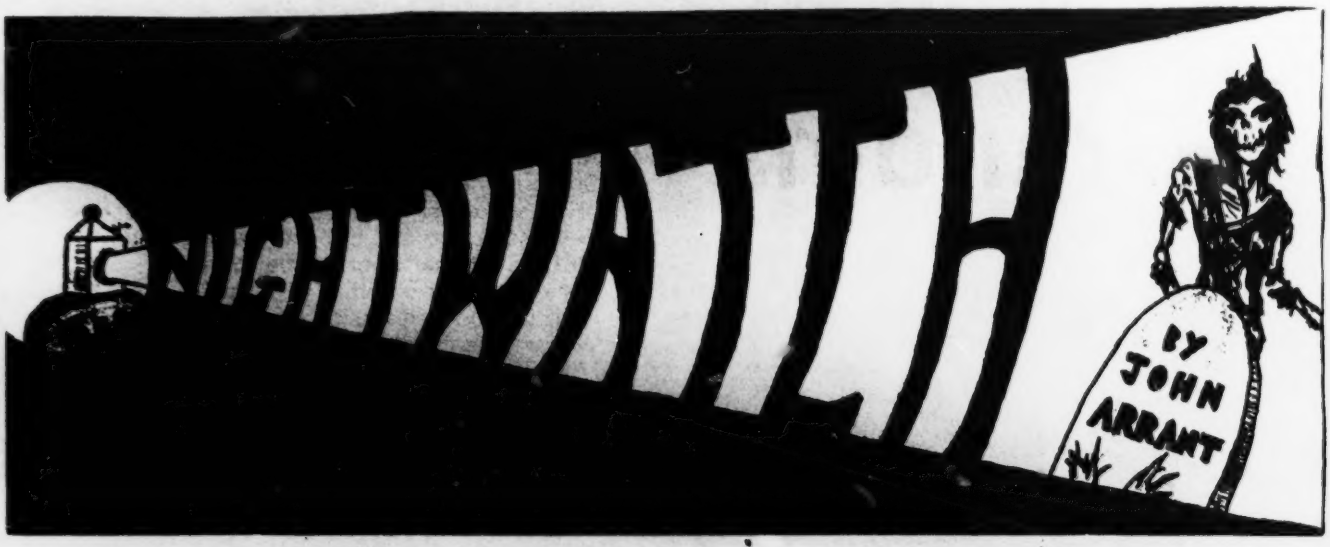
—Skip Williams

Gettysburg

Where man and horse died,
The grass was wet and Plum Run flowed
With the blood of fifty thousand men.
Foul winds brought the vultures
To sit in the budding Virginia trees.
Gone since are the bones,
But keen is the memory of the vultures,
Like homesick children,
Still they come to haunt
The battleground covered with crosses.

—Rose Ann Barnhill

by Daniel Broening



It's 9:10 as a thick mist covers the dark field of Dunsinane Cemetery, a mist which sticks to the throats of nightwatchmen Jake Lonegy and Niles Bens.

"Sure is one 'ell of a soupy night, eh Niles!" Jake starts with a smile as sinister as the place he is to protect.

"Kinda gives me th' creeps." Niles turns his head and continues, "... like th' first time we ate our supper here."

"Forty years of wurking and eating here and it still gives you th' creeps ... hey 'ere's 'at new grave. What say we put down th' shovels and crack open a bot'le ov'r th' new blokes 'ead," Jake says with a chuckle.

"Sounds like a good idea to me, mate," Niles answers with an evil look in his eye.

The two men rest their shovels and themselves on the cold gray stone warmed with etchings of cupids and flowers and a carved message: "I'll miss you."

As the two men pass a bottle of green whiskey between them, Niles says, "This American stuff is pretty good but caun't beat ours ... Right?"

"Yea... It's ah mighty good think ' at cheeky buther 'n law ah mine wurks at the ship yard," Jake replies.

"Ere you are, mate, 'ere's a taste for you b'fore dinner," Niles says as he pours the harsh liquid on the soft dirt of the new grave.

Jake looks up and says, "I am bit hungry. What say we get started digging."

"I'm all for 'at idea," Niles says; and as if on cue, the earth begins to bubble upward and part. The men gasp and back up. Their faces are twisted in horror, their lips open wide as if to release sound, their eyes open so wide they appear to be crawling from their sockets.

Despite the reactions of the cemetery guards, the corpse continues to free itself from its prison like a butterfly escapes from its caccoon. Finally it lifts itself up from the grave which was to be its final home, and it hisses. Its eyes fix themselves on the seemingly frozen Jake and Niles. Its face, now a total grimace, moves toward the cemetery watchmen.

Suddenly Niles and Jake let out a scream, not unlike a battle cry, and lunge furiously to attack the animated corpse. The sound of hisses and the breaking of dead flesh and bone fills the night air. The vigorous furiosity of these two old men proves more than the corpse can handle; it is easily defeated.

"Well at least we didn't 'ave to dig it up, right Jake?"

"Yea... eh would you mind letin' me 'ave the fingers this time?"

by Daniel Broening

In The Shadows

I can see the demon standing
Over my rival's body in the shadows.
Its massive seven foot body, muscles of steel,
Could crush diamond,
Its horns like twisted javelins cruelly tipped,
talons like swords, teeth like daggers,
All dripping blood and poison in the shadows.
Its breath reeks with the stench of brimstone
Its scales are granite that none can pierce,
He has struck down my rival as I bid him to
And the demon says, "It is time to pay,"
I know now why it is wrong
To bargain with Hell, in the shadows.

—Joe Daniel

Grandma

Grandma's Lover

I go through her things
Everything I expect is there:
Old letters from Grandad, a few elementary grammar books,
Two Edgar Allan Poe collections
And her wedding dress (once white, now faded to ecre)
In the bottom of her hope chest
Lies an antique shoe box.
I blow the dust from the lid, open it,
Set it aside.

A black and white photo of a sailor
Stares back at me. I lift it, and
Underneath lies a delicate pair of black silk nylons,
A few letters.
One by one, I read the letters.
Every 'I Love You' is circled, underlined
Except the last letter
There is no 'I Love You'.
I remember Grandma telling me
Before she passed away.
"I died long ago, this'll just make it easier for me."

I fold the fragile papers, put them back into the envelopes.
My tears have dried and I pack her things back into the chest.
Everything except the shoe box.

Outside, a cool breeze has come up
And I yell at the loading men
To be careful with the chest.
I get into my car, set the box beside me.
And follow the moving van back to my house.
A single tear finds its way to my chin
I am shivering in the afternoon heat.
I shake my hair in the wind
Rushing through the windows
My tear lands justly on the shoebox.

In my mind, I see it.
Sinking into the box,
Smearing the ink on the last letter
Just as Grandma's tear must have been the one
To smear the signature

Finally,
Robert.

—Monique Clark

Sing Me a Song, Grandma

Grandma sits on the couch and rocks
As she sings "Go Tell It On The Mountain"
I walk over to her, fake a heart attack,
And fall to the floor.
She puts her feet on my back and closes her eyes
"Hey, wake up. I'm dead; you're supposed to
Fall beside me and cry, 'My baby is dead.'"
"If I got on that floor, I'd be there
For the rest of my life."
I get up and I sit beside her
With my head on her shoulder.
"Sing me a song, Grandma, "Jambalaya"
As she sings, I go to sleep,
I know she will be here when I wake up.

—Jessica Eubanks

by Shannon Boshears and Lee Quinn

by John Arrant

Grampa Hal

"Knucklehead"
That's what Grampa Hal called me.
Then he laughed.
I can't exactly remember
His laugh
Or his face,
But I remember
We fished,
He helped me drive the big red boat.
Grampa held my hand
We played his version of patty-cake.
I thought Grampa Hal was young like me.
I could never wait to visit
My best pal.
Since his death I've heard stories -
"Six speeding tickets in one day"
And his spur of the moment excursions.
Maybe he did over-do it,
But he was the happiest man
I ever knew.
He stayed young,
And so will I,
If I remember Grampa Hal.

—Mindy Hawes

Grandpa

Grandad

I see him
He sits in the boat
Alone,
Fishing.
Wrinkles on his forehead
Hold dust of years passed
Like bookshelves,
Tired with their burden.
He turns to see us coming
His face creases to a smile
He stands
Stretches
As we pull along-side him
He looks at me first
I cross from one boat to the other
"Hey Punkin!" he says
His voice like gravel
I can smell the dust now,
In his skin
As he reaches out,
Hugs me,
Closes his eyes,
And rests his tired chin on my shoulder.

—Monique Clark

Room 324

Papaw lies in his bed on the third floor of the Dewitt Nursing Home.
The straps hold him tight and the drugs confuse him.
Through the small window he can see trees and fields.
The tall dark wall of a forests' edge and the rich
black ground, frozen hard.
He is alone in his world of horses and cotton.
He doesn't see the parking lot of cars
He doesn't know his wife of fifty-three years
He doesn't hear his daughter crying in the hall
He doesn't smell the yellow death of his childhood
friend in the room next door.

—John Buffalo

Pappy

—Doug Griep

"Pappy! You musn't go so close to the edge. Let's go back to the station wagon and have some coffee."

Pappy maneuvered his tennis shoe under a pebble and neatly flicked it over the edge of the cliff. He turned to the canyon for a final look, then walked back to his daughter Jenny. Hmmph. A twenty-five year old girl telling me to move away from the edge. Hmph. What does she know? She married Ralph; what does she know about anything?

"Did Ralph get doughnuts?" Pappy said.

"We've got all kinds of doughnuts," Ralph shouted from the car. He was standing at the back of the car opening doughnut packages and pouring coffee. He was a tall thin man, and he had long sandy-brown hair. He wore jeans and an open-necked shirt; his toes were brown from wearing sandals. Pappy's pace quickened once he heard the rattle of the doughnut packages. He zoomed by Jenny as if he didn't see her; Jenny had to jog a couple of paces to catch up. As they approached the car, Jenny began to outline the activities for the day for Pappy.

"Now first we'll go to the Devil's Arch - it's supposed to be the highlight of Rattlesnake Canyon. Then we'll go to Rock Point, and from there we'll go a couple of miles to an Indian pueblo site. The pueblo sites were once occupied by the Zuni Indians, but somewhere around 400 A.D. a drought began and it . . ."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Pappy interrupted. "Does Ralph have coffee? Ralph, you got some coffee?"

Pappy and Jenny reached the car and Ralph passed them styrofoam cups of coffee.

"Be careful, this coffee's really hot," Ralph said. "Ah, it's going to be a great day. Here's some napkins."

The three looked out over the canyon as they ate. Pappy slurped a mouthful of coffee and promptly spit it out.

"Damn, this coffee's hot!" He splashed the rest of the coffee on the ground. "I need some more coffee, make it snappy and make it cooler." He thrusted his cup in Ralph's face.

"Good Lord, I just told you to be careful. Jenny, didn't I just say . . ."

"Oh, Ralph, please, let's have fun today; give him some more coffee," Jenny pleaded.

We've shrunk, I knew it. As soon as we were halfway into New Mexico, I knew it. My shoes felt too big.

"We've shrunk," he said aloud.

"Oh, all right." Ralph poured Pappy's cup full of coffee. "Drink it slow and blow on it. And remember - it's hot, very hot."

"You better believe it, kid," Pappy answered. "I just about . . ." He began patting his pockets in search of a light. "My matches, where's my matches? Jenny - where's my matches?"

"I don't know, how am I sup-" Jenny started.

"Never mind." Pappy found a matchbook in his shirt pocket and proceeded to light his cigar.

"I said I just about burned my mouth - yes. I'll be careful - that coffee's hot."

Pappy took a puff on his cigar and leaned against the car. His baseball cap was neatly placed on his head and his small white beard was neatly trimmed. The whiskers were yellowish near his mouth where his cigar poked out. He wore a blue wind-breaker, and he had on a pair of old blue jeans. Yes, he thought, it's going to be a great day.

"How deep is this canyon, Ralph?"

"I think it's about a thousand feet deep."

"Jesus. Boy, this is one heck of a ditch." Pappy took another sip of coffee. He swallowed it and then looked in his cup. "Damn, this coffee's hot."

Jenny sighed. "C'mon, let's get going or we won't have time to see everything."

Ralph and Jenny gathered their doughnut packages and threw them away. Pappy threw out the rest of his coffee. He neatly stuffed his cellophane package into the cup, took another puff on his cigar and then began to steadily push the lit end of the cigar through the cellophane until it burned through at the bottom of the cup.

"Burn, sucker."

Ralph shut the tailgate and got into the car. Jenny waited by the open passenger door. "Let's go, Pappy."

Pappy dropped the cup and walked over to the open door, then stopped. A perplexed look was on his face.

"My cigar, where's my cigar? Jenny, where's my cigar?"

"I don't know, you can smoke another one later; get in. Let's go already."

Pappy slid to the middle of the seat next to Ralph. Jenny got in and shut the door. She always sat next to the door while Ralph was driving. He didn't want Pappy fooling around with the door handle. Ralph started the car and pulled out onto the road.

"O.K., let's see," Ralph said, "we're going to Devil's Arch, right?"

"Yes. Go about two miles and we should turn right and that road should lead us to it. It's the highlight of the Canyon; it was supposedly a huge boulder that was in the path of an ancient river, and the river cut a hole in it. Then erosion and wind began widening it and . . ."

As Ralph and Jenny discussed

the geological history of the Devil's Arch, Pappy stared out the windshield at the different rock formations.

The Arizona morning was clear and he could see for miles. The enormous Western sky fascinated Pappy; he pushed his head up against the windshield to look at the clouds. Why is the sky so big here, he thought. In Chicago the sky isn't so big, why is it so big here? We've shrunk, I knew it. As soon as we were halfway into New Mexico, I knew it. My shoes felt too big.

"We've shrunk," he said aloud.

Ralph looked at Pappy, then at Jenny, started to speak and decided not to.

Jenny continued the geology lesson. " . . . so for, oh, about 30,000 years the granite cooled and eventually . . ."

Pappy sat back and lit a cigar. Crack the window, someone crack the window. He puffed hard on the cigar so that a thick layer of smoke gathered in the front seat. Pappy nudged Jenny with his elbow.

"The window, open the window - I can't BREATHE."

Jenny cracked open the window. They pulled into a small parking area on the side of the road. There was a small sign posted on the edge of the cliff which read—

Devil's Arch - Highlight of Rattlesnake Rock Canyon. No guardrails - Please watch your children.

Ralph opened his door, got out, went to the rear and opened the tailgate. He began to search for the camera. Jenny hopped out and ran to the sign and then looked across the canyon.

"Beautiful, just beautiful. Ralph, get the camera. This is really great."

"I-am-trying-to-find-it-honey. Geez, here it is right in front of me." Ralph put the camera strap around his neck, shut the tailgate and walked over to the sign and Jenny.

Pappy remained in the car puffing on his cigar. He had his arms stretched our on top of the seats, and his legs were spread-eagle with the gearshift between his knees. He had watched Jenny read the sign, and he heard her ramble wildly to herself. As he listened to Ralph cuss during the search for the camera, he reached to the back with one arm, opened a cooler and grabbed a cold beer. He opened it at the precise moment Ralph shut the tailgate. The "psssh" of the beer synchronized perfectly with the "boom" of the tailgate. Pappy giggled. This must be one hell of a beer, he thought. I'd better drink it fast. He slouched down in the seat so he could barely see over the dashboard.

by Hanna Bartsch

Ralph was standing next to Jenny near the cliff's edge, fiddling with the camera.

"I wish we had a bigger lens. I won't be able to get much of a shot with this thing. Why don't you stand up on that rock and Pappy can stand . . . wait a minute, where is Pappy? Where'd he go?" Ralph turned and looked out at the road.

"Ralph, I don't know. Didn't you see him get out? My God, he's probably wandering somewhere . . . somewhere near a cliff - Ralph, where is he."

"Stop it, Jenny. He's gotten lost before, and we've always found him. He knows how to handle himself . . . better than you think. Now settle down and let's look around, we'll just follow his footsteps in the sand from the car and we'll find him."

They walked back to the car and studied the ground for traces of Pappy's footsteps. They discovered the sand was too packed near the car to see any footsteps. The sun shone on the tinted windshield; Ralph and Jenny couldn't see Pappy inside the car sipping on his beer. Pappy remained silent.

"Well, Jenny," Ralph said, "it looks like we're gonna have to search for him. He couldn't have gotten very far; he probably just went for a stroll."

"I'll go down the path and see if

He was back in Fort Sill now, driving into town to pick up Roxanne . . . he was looking forward to what the night would bring.

he's down there near those boulders. You go up the path, see if he's up there. And Ralph, if we don't find him in a half an hour, we'll come back—"

"—And call the police."

Pappy finished his beer. What the hell are those two up to, he wondered. They're running around like a pair of headless chickens. He giggled as he popped open his second beer. Headless chickens. The car was parked next to a boulder large enough to shade the car. Pappy rolled down the windows, a breeze cooled the interior. He was confused about why Ralph and Jenny had come up to the car and had not spoken to him. They seemed to have lost something. Whatever it was they were looking for must not have been too important since they hadn't asked for his help. He had burped but they didn't hear it. Pappy laughed. "Geez, that was a loud burp. Well, anyway, I've got the keys and the beer; they can do all the sight-seeing they want, they won't hear a complaint from me." He flipped on the radio and burped again. He changed the station and found one he liked. Some blues; he hadn't heard any rhythm and blues in years. Pappy was ecstatic; he was sitting in the shade, there was a case of beer in the back seat, and there was some rhythm and blues on the radio. He hadn't heard of these guys before.

". . . and coming up next is a groovy number by the Blues Brothers." He began bouncing his feet to the rhythm. I like the beat, one-two, two-two, three-two . . . The organ kept up and whoever played the electric guitar wasn't that good, but he kept up, too. It was a live recording. He could hear the audience whistling and clapping. He drank his beer and snapped his fingers. One-snap, two-snap, three-snap. . .

"But right now I'd like to talk a little about this tune you're hearin'."

This is, of course, the Green Onions.

It was a very, very big hit of the early sixties in this country of ours and of course-

It was composed
and recorded
In Memphis, Tennessee, right here in the United STATESSSS of AMERICA"

Pappy was getting excited now, his chin was punching in and out

A chill went up then down
his neck.

He drank the last swallow with his left hand and grabbed another beer from the cooler with his right hand. "PSSSH." Pappy moved himself over behind the wheel and gripped the steering wheel.

He was back in Fort Sill now, driving into town to pick up Roxanne. Phosphorescent lights shimmered off his shades; he was looking forward to what the night would bring. Bird Colonel McDuff would have his ass if he knew he was taking the jeep up to Lawton. He'd just have to make sure he cleaned the red dust off the jeep before he brought it back to the motor pool. He'd be off to New York tomorrow and then overseas; this was going to be one heck of a night.

Ralph couldn't understand where that old man had gone off to. No good shouting for him, he wouldn't answer me anyway. He took another look around him; there was nothing in sight but sand and rock. He took off his sandal and shook the sand from it. This is ridiculous.

Jenny was walking along a path near a pile of boulders. Suddenly she stopped and looked down. Fossils, fossils! I've stumbled into a fossil bed! She picked up a rock and studied it. Hmmm. A crinoid. "Ralph, the camera, bring the camera!"

But Ralph was far away shaking sand from his sandals.

The twisted solo of a guitar shrieked out. Something popped in Pappy's brain. He turned the key and revved up the engine. He pulled onto the road and speeded away.

"Roxanne, watch this!" he screamed.

"Here comes a car, Jenny. That might be him."

Ralph and Jenny were sitting in the shade of the large boulder. They had searched for an hour for Pappy and had finally given up. When they came back to the car, they discovered it was gone. The spot down the highway was shimmering and wobbling in a mirage and then suddenly the car became clear. It was a state trooper.

"Ralph, something tells me Pappy is in that trooper-car."

"I know. I feel sick, Jenny."

The car pulled onto the dirt spot and drove up next to Jenny and Ralph. They stood up as the officer got out of the car.

"Hello. Got an old man in here, says he's the father of one of you-two. Caught him ten miles down the highway doing 95 and it took ten minutes to pull him over. C'mon, take a look."

Ralph and Jenny looked into the car.

"Ah, Geez, Pappy, what the . . . why did you do . . . uh Geez." Ralph looked over to Jenny. "Geez."

"Well," the officer said, "we've got to take him down to the station. You two are gonna have to come. Let's go."

Ralph and Jenny climbed into the back seat with Pappy. "I can't believe you did this - no, yes, I can," Ralph said.

The state trooper started the car. As he began to drive onto the road, Pappy spoke. "My cigars, Jenny. Where's my cigars?"

Tourist Information

Enter into my world of madness.
Introductions shall be made if needed,
depending upon your pursuit of satisfaction.
On your left will be daydreams of suffering heros.
To the right, fantasized obscentities acted out.
Experience my world of reality.
Join me in my search
for the land of ash and red mountains
where the sun is of purple neon
and vegetation is not.
Run with me through the desert of burning coals,
and bathe with me in the blood of my last visitor.
I invite you to come in,
and please, close the door behind you.
We will feast on each other's ideas.
Let us laugh at the ones who are deprived of our luxuries and maintain sympathy for those who are not.
No thinking please as we enter my abyss.
As you have noticed, we are standing in the dark, due to a malfunction with the energy source.
We hope not to regain power shortly.
While traveling down my escalator of phobias,
I ask that you keep your hands inside and
your fears to yourself.
For we will share feelings only when you have said yes.
Don't let me scare you off just because I say things I mean.
I detect a bit of resistance in your eyes.
Surely you want to stay with me.
Please don't turn away now!
Don't leave, we've just begun to live.
Ah . . . well, I hope you have enjoyed your stay.
Please come back soon, and may I remind
you that I will always be in your mind.
I am no hallucination.
Welcome . . .
to my world of madness

—Shannon Boshears

by Hanna Bartsch

The Dark Side Of My Yard

The garden where I cultivate
My fears is doing well.
The hysteria vines climb
to intertwine with the paranoia.
They grab and clutch
for my wall of defense.

The lone patches of time and sanity
Struggle through the hardened soil.
Dark grows on the side,
it won't get weeded,
Worms breed,
under the dark.
They weave in and out of the roots,
fertilize the phobias
until the sun goes down.

—Cindy Fiser

by Shellie Fletcher

by Hanna Bartsch

The Rock Zoo

Out in the alley, behind our house
With a stick I trace out great open pens,
Lions and tigers on the right,
Bears and rabbits on the left,
The giraffes and zebras I let run free.
With my daddy's old paint brush I sweep the pens clean.

I stand barefooted
And suddenly a car runs over my zoo.
I scream at them, they don't stop.
I get on my knees and begin again
To brush out my pens,
But my animals have all run far away.

—Rose Ann Barnhill

The Sailboat Builder

The world at first is a pop-up picture book.
Mother and Father and Johnny down the street.
The backyard, the toy drum, skinned knees, mud pies
Jump into my vision like Christmas.

Once I built a sailboat in the field behind my house.
The grass high as my knee blew in stormy waves.
I landed, threw off the anchor and waded out into the woods.
The trees stretched farther up than I could reach.
So I climbed and found the world quite different looking down,
Everything bright, angling up to me,
But my mother called me home for lunch.

Wandering home, through the neighbor's yards and past the sailboat
I saw a gray-silent man sitting on the curb,
One hand fisted tight around a pocket knife, the other cradled a bit of wood.
He stared at his hands with his gray puzzled eyes and said nothing.

I laughed aloud, beause he couldn't see
The image frozen beneath the surface of the wood.

—Caitlin Scott

by Elaine Cornett

Sleep

Darkness falls in slow motion
Like coins through water
Like a cold wet cloth
It descends to press my forehead.

I disappear into darkness
Like sea water sinking into sand,
Like thick mist enveloping airplanes.
I lose consciousness in sand and cloud sleep.

My head lies sunken in the pillow,
My hands hold themselves before my face
Like cupping drinking water,
Like looking at a captured lightning bug.

I dream of falling,
I hear wind rushing through my body
Like salt air blowing through palm trees,
Like water pouring through a sieve.

I wake before I strike the end
Before all the water seeps through my fingers,
Before my hands close over lightning bugs,
Before the coins lie flat on my eyelids.

—Caitlin Scott

The Onset of Winter

I watch a leaf twirl down the harvest breeze
On fire as the sun's rays burn through
Veins drained of life.
It becomes lost with the many
In a scarlet floor.
Rain will douse their colors
As they rot in the gutter
And the street sweeper
Will pass by unheeding.

—Rose Ann Barnhill

After All

I cross the bridge, the flooded field,
The rain gathers on the shoulders
of my worn sandstone fatigues
I watch it stream in front of my eyes,
like hot sticky candy

The end of my cigarette glows red,
It dodges the raindrops and shakes between
my quivering lips.
I need some place to think and feel warm, clean and dry.

—John Buffalo

by C. H. Kerr

by Shannon Boshears & Lee Quinn

February

—Rose Ann Barnhill

Rows of white tombstones stood witness to the arrival of the funeral procession at the military cemetary. Daddy and I had gone past here hundreds of times on our way to the airport. The February day was overcast but wasn't cold. I didn't know half the people, but they said they knew me. I walked up to the blue tent where twenty gray fold-out chairs were, and where Daddy's casket sat. "I'm just fourteen," I thought as I sat down in the first chair of the first row, Mom sat further down, closest to the casket. My sister, Berkeley, stood and read poetry at the head of the flag covered casket.

Daddy had always told me that death was something a person shouldn't worry about. If there was a problem, Daddy had a solution, no matter if it was doing homework, substituting hubcaps for plates, or rigging a trotline. His philosophy was simple. He would look at me and say, "As long as you know where to go to learn what you want to know, you don't need to know all there is to know."

The woods and rivers were Daddy's first love. I had to be pretty steady to keep up with him. When I was nine, Daddy took me frog gigging. In the dark I held onto his belt loop as we walked down the muddy path to the boat. With the spotlight along the water's edge, we could see green and red spider eyes. When we found a frog, I wouldn't let Daddy gig it. He never got any frogs when I went with him.

I watched the two military men fold the flag beside the casket. When people started crying, I got up and walked over to the hole where they were going to put my daddy. I stood looking down. It was deep and well-dug. The dirt was an orange-red clay. It was like looking through the dark.

I remembered the last time I had seen him. On Sunday nights I always rode to the end of our block on the sideboard of his camper, his big red and silver camper he had made from a Finkbeiner meat truck. Last Sunday night I had looked through the dark into the cab of his camper and said, "Good-bye, Daddy." Then I had run back to the house.

I stepped back from the grave as the men from the funeral home lowered his casket, and I said for the last time, "Good-bye, Daddy."

Funeral

Everyone was screaming and shouting,
Sad and crying.
I kept a straight face.
I felt little grief.
I didn't know the man.
I only went to catch a girl.
Everyone else knew him.
I'm glad I didn't.
Everyone looked like elephants and cows.
There was no one there for me.
Then they dropped him in and
That was that.

—William Belmaster

Flowers in the Rain

My cousin Jerry ties his tie
And tries to forget his mother's face.
The warm summer rain presses hard on the weeds,
And drips from a hole in the gutter.

The old preacher's hands shake as he searches for the page
In his leather-backed Book.
His body seems to sway with the rainy wind,
His funeral suit much too big for his frail frame,
And his ears, much too big for his drawn face.
His mind sways too,
But his eyes fix hard on a place above the trees
Not glancing at the Book in his hands.

—John Buffalo

The Waiter at Captain Crisdale's

His white coat
Speckled with black oyster guts,
He shucks at the bar.
His deft hands slice and splice -
My oily plate now glistens
Oysters slid down my throat.

His silked hair reflects his smooth gestures
A British accent mixed with a Maryland drawl

"Your crabcakes, ma'am."
"And your draft and clams, sir."
"And 'ere's a bisque fer you, m'boy."

It's his lunch, too
He sips beers with his crones in the back,
He laughs and guffaws
Spreads his peg leg to the opposite bench.

He dumps ice in the sink
Ruby red lobsters tumble out of the metal can
Beside a sky blue wall,
An old time white-faced clock above his head,
A plastic crab above the clock,
He stands content.

—Eric Barlund

A Simple Sound

The salty waters sweep the hard sands,
A seaman's voice encased in foamy suds
Sings and shouts with each wash.
I watch as his soul peaks
and chafes the sand piper's tracks.

—Rose Ann Barnhill

Clouds

White horses stamp
Above trees.
A puppy frowns,
As the wind changes directions.
An albino bass swims
Through its blue home.
A bird spreads its wings,
The profile of a friend
Looks away.

—Jennifer Dickey

by Shellie Fletcher

Actually, he was not at fault at all. It was an accident - certainly not a purposeful act - that he committed. He was a hunter, but he truly respected life. In no way did he intend murder, for the very thought disgusted him.

The dove was a docile creature with pink eyes; a long, slender, yellow beak tinted pink at the corners; and, a breast covered with soft feathers. It was a creature of dignity. Its coo was tranquil and comforting, never shrill or harsh like many of the birds around the hunter's property. Its tail was long, like the extravagant train of a king, but it never touched the earth. The hunter found much delight in gazing at the dove, often doing so for hours, as it casually dined on the dried seed he routinely threw out.

One blustery autumn day he loaded his automatic shot gun and set out to hunt quail and squirrel, even though both were out of season. The weather became progressively worse and, likewise, did his spirits. He had decided to return home empty-handed when he suddenly flushed several quail by accident. He took aim and pulled the trigger. A volley of shot rang out. One of the birds fell a good forty feet away and did not move. The hunter walked to the creature, preparing to place it in his knapsack.

As he approached, he glanced at the bird; strangely enough, it did not resemble a quail. Upon closer examination he discovered he had slain the dove which he had admired. Its beak was slightly open, and its pink tongue lazily hung out of its mouth. Its breast was gashed and bloody.

After a while, he picked up the limp white body with his left hand and slowly turned to walk home. He was anguished to know he had slain the one thing which he had greatly cherished.

Oppressed with the event, he happened to look into the dove's eyes and their gaze turned his blood to ice. Instead of pink, they were crimson red, like two ovals of Hellish fire. They seemed to pierce his soul, to mock him with the abhorrance of a thousand enemies. He tried to squeeze the lids shut—they resisted as if glued open. He quickened his pace to equal that of his heart, wishing he was safe in his cottage with a warm fire in the hearth and a hot cup of coffee in his hand, instead of this insidious dove. The bushes scraped roughly against him as if to prevent him from his destination.

> *"Good is tarnished by you; you will be tarnished as well."*

Racing homeward, the hunter sighted a small squirrel, which chattered at him from a nearby sapling. Gleaming a hideous red, its eyes confounded the hunter and slowed him momentarily. It opened its mouth, a toothy maw, and spoke, "Good is tarnished by you; you will be tarnished as well! Your bullets are useless now; you will shoot in vain!" Its diabolical voice permeated all the forest and struck terror into the hunter's heart. He cursed and fled. He did not stop until he was safe in his home where he collapsed upon his bed.

After some time had elapsed, the hunter snatched up a shovel and behind his cottage dug a hole about three feet deep, there he deposited the dove's carcass. Promptly shovelling dirt upon it, he completely covered it with earth and leaves.

Exhausted, he straggled into his home and began to prepare his supper. Venturing into his garden, he noticed several dozen blackbirds raiding the few vegetables he had left. Disgusted, he retrieved his gun and fired to scare them off. Shortly after the shot, the forest was quiet—too quiet. The hunter glanced over his shoulder toward the cottage and horror overwhelmed him. He saw the dove, its breast bloody and its eyes dark with the fire of hatred. Evil had possessed this creature of peace and goodness. He stepped forward to shoot and impaled his foot on a rusty nail sticking out of an old wooden board lying on the ground. He yelled and cursed violently, directing all his rage not at his own folly, but at the dove, which was now nowhere to be seen.

He limped back to the cottage, angry at his rotten luck and fearful of the admonition he had received earlier. Stumbling through the door, he fell; then, struggling, he pulled himself up along the wall and grabbed the phone receiver. Dialing his family doctor in a town twenty miles away, the hunter told him who he was and what had happened to him.

"Have you ever had a tetanus shot?" the doctor asked.

"No!" he exclaimed. "Not since I was a child." His head was pounding, and the pain in his foot was excruciating. He stood on his good leg like a frightened flamingo.

"I'll be over as soon as I can. Wash your wound, bandage it, and keep off of it."

"Thank you, Doctor," he said and hung up.

Trying to remain calm, he treated

his wound and bandaged it—then, feeling extremely hungry, he sliced some tomatoes, almost cutting himself several times in the process. The sun was quickly setting and night noises were beginning.

These noises became more prevalent, more intense. The man began to pace the floor, limping to and fro, constantly checking outside, anxious for any sign of the doctor.

Eating the tomato slices, he continued his pacing, while involuntarily rubbing his unkempt chin and wringing his hands. He started at unexpected sounds, and his nostrils flared. Still, he remained inside, not wanting to leave or stay.

His soul vexed, he took down his prized hunting knife and felt the blade. Too dull, he thought. He began sharpening it, the scraping noises slicing his senses, giving him some relief by distracting him from the cacophony without.

After the edge was again keen enough to slice paper, he set the knife down, picked up his gun, cleaned it, and re-loaded it. Then, opening the window a crack, he set his gun and waited, even blowing out his only light source, the lantern next to him.

For minutes he sat there gazing into the ominous woods, listening only to the rhythm of his breathing and heartbeat. With the passing of each second, he became more bitter. The pain in his foot proudly announced itself, as did the one is his hand. The wind whistled mournfully through the trees—the place was pitch black, as there was no moon. His teeth began to chatter and his body to shiver, but not with cold.

He strained to see what could not be seen; he sensed something he could not understand. "What's keeping him!" he exclaimed. Then a fair distance away, he heard a songbird trill. "Song birds never sing at night," he thought, "unless something wakes them." He felt a cold sickness envelop him. His breathing became erratic as the wind erased any remaining comfort.

Suddenly, he spied a small, white object some thirty feet away approaching him. As it come closer, he gasped in astonishment. Glowing with an eerie phosphorescent light, it was the dove. Those eyes - how malevolent they looked! Their cold, unwavering glare sliced through the dark of night and numbed him. He tried to speak, but could not; his eyes were transfixed on the spectre before him.

It came closer, still closer. When he could clearly see its bloody breast, he decided to shoot. He had to destroy the damned thing. Mechanically, he gripped the gun, set his fingers on the trigger, and pulled it. Bullets screamed as they blasted out from the barrel, but they missed their target.

Cursing like a madman, the hunter jumped out of his chair, as the dove's hypnotic spell was broken. Vile bitterness coursing through his veins, he kicked open his door.

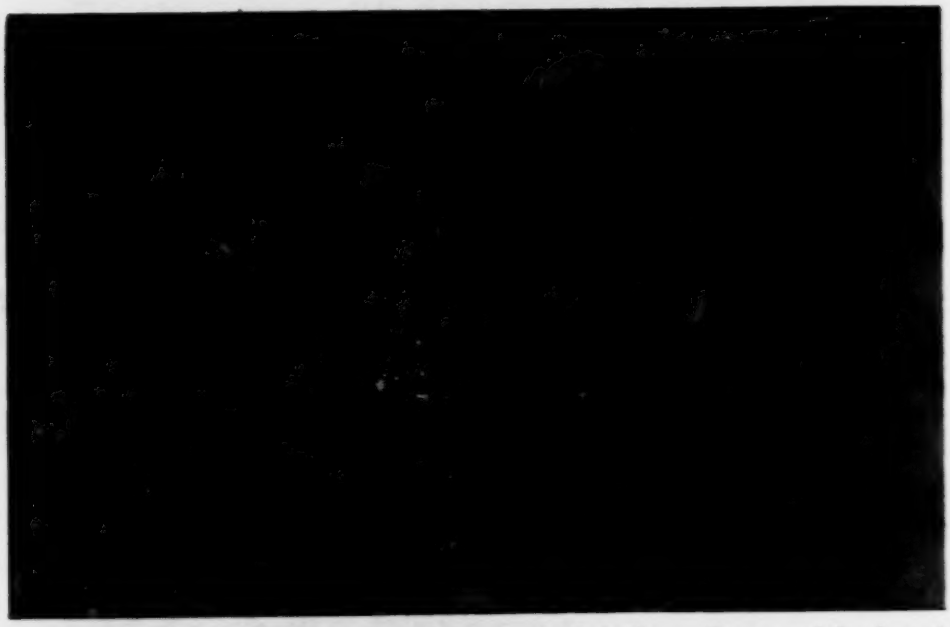
Immediately before him, levitating six feet in the air, was that demoniac apparition he so loathed. Its small red mouth opened, told him he was the doctor, and asked why he was shooting.

"Liar!" the hunter cursed and raised his gun. "You won't ever bother me again. See if I don't shoot you this time!"

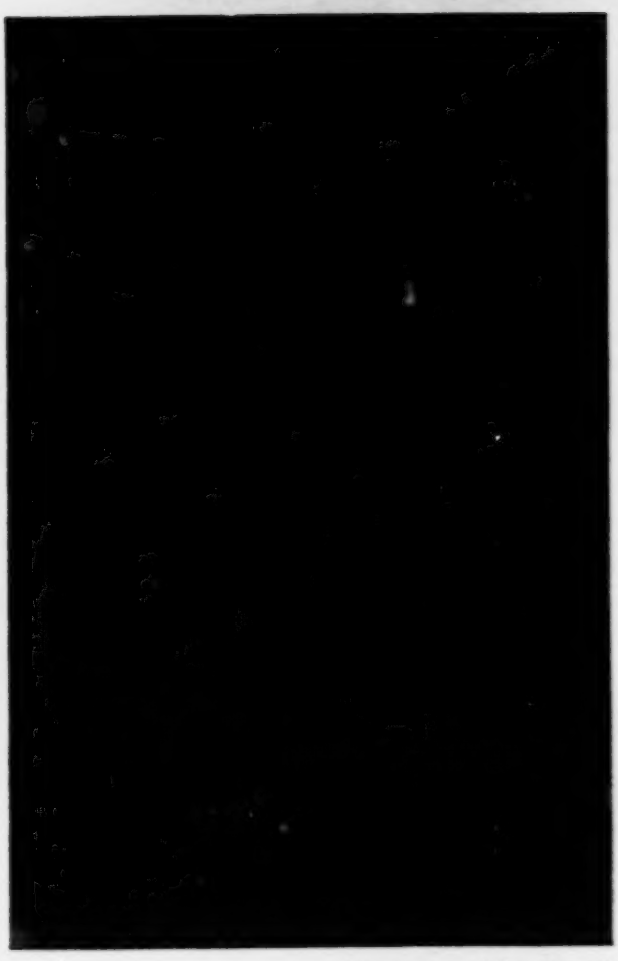
Before he could get off a shot, the apparition sailed at him, struck its beak into his chest once, twice, and a third time. The last stabbed deep into his heart, slashing its very fiber. The gun slipped out of his grasp as the blood ebbed from his body and stained his clothing. He gasped for breath, but coughed up blood instead. His knees buckled and he collapsed flat upon his face. Grovelling in the dirt, he tried to staunch the blood loss, but it continued to flow as if drawn out by an invisible leech. He cursed the dove and that he had ever cared; he hated everything now. It was not fair for him to die; he wanted to live. He screamed maniacally and beat the earth with his fist. Then, suddenly, he relaxed. His heart gave up its pain, and as he exhaled his last breath, he saw the red eyes of the dove staring down at him. He knew even in death he had no freedom from the dove. It would gaze at him an eternity with those eyes—those eyes!

by Chuck Hanson

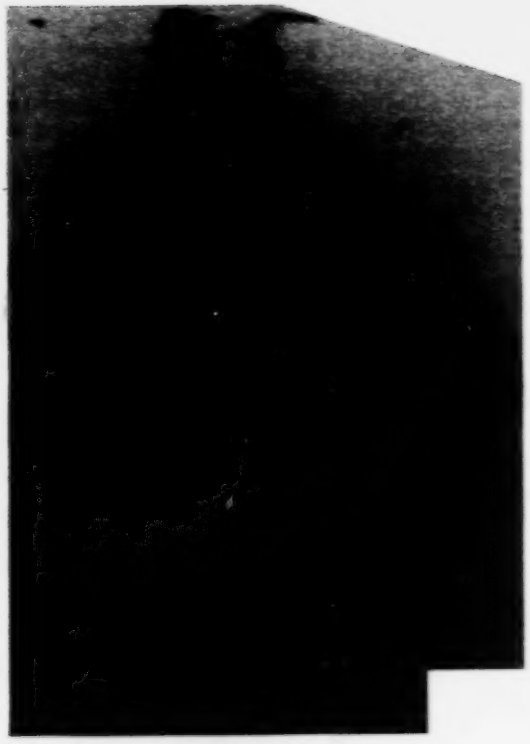
GALLERY



Lady in Green Dress — John Arrant

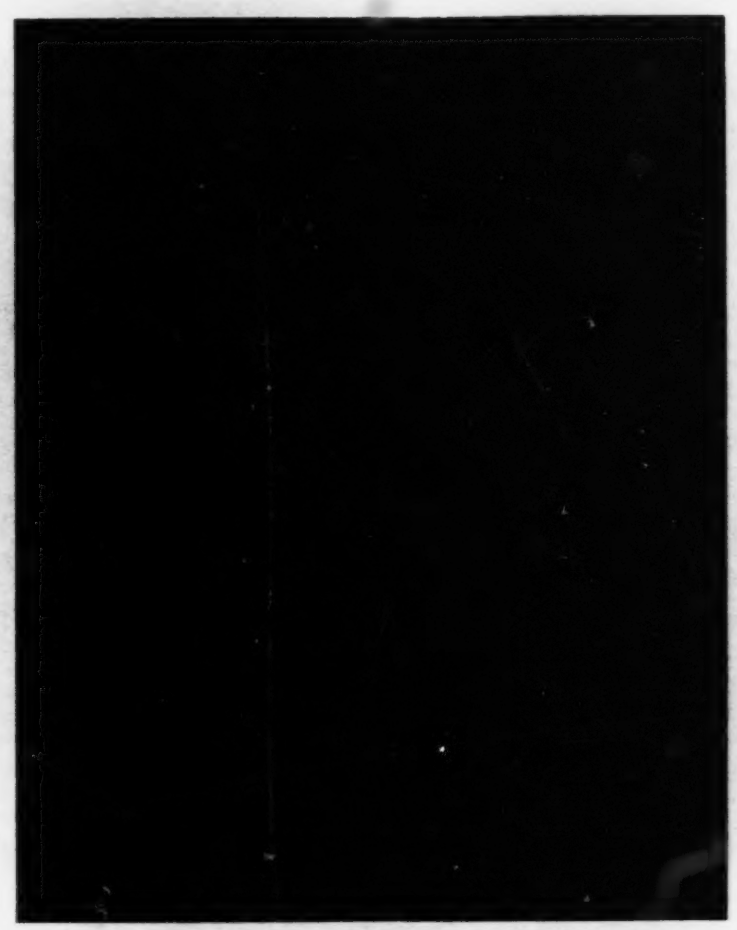


Jeanne — John Arrant



Male Nude — Daniel Broening

John's Lady — John Arrant



Portrait of a French Lady — Christopher Weems

Sailboating at Glen Cove —
Christopher Weems

Wispy Skyler peers through the dirty, barred window of his dingy white room. His eyes frantically absorb the flight of a rusty brown sparrow as it cuts a path out and then lights upon the ledge under Wispy's window. Wispy races over and kneels down to face the sparrow in the eye.

"Hey . . . bird. Remember me? Didn't you used to live in that little green house on top of my roof? Yeah, Yeah . . . I know it was you. You came to see me! I knew you would. I'm sorry I left you alone, but you know how these people can be. They worry too much about other people's business. If they'd just left me alone, we could all have lived together like I wanted."

Wispy reaches up to wipe his frozen breath off the window and finds that the sparrow has left him.

"Wait bird! I want to go with you!"

"Mr. Skyler, It's time for your appointment."

Wispy leaps to his feet and is met in the doorway by a 275 pound nurse bound by a white polyester jumpsuit.

"Dr. Kernel is waiting."

She extends her right arm into the hallway to show him the way, and his malnourished body moves into the hall. His hands are rigid and curved inward. His feet begin to paw at the ground and kick out behind him. With each step his neck juts outward, and his eyes squint from underneath his fine, brown hair. Wispy and the nurse walk side by side silently as the sterile, tiled corridor swallows them up.

"Come in, come in. Wispy Skyler?"

Wispy nods and walks into the lavish office decorated with polished oak furniture and tropical plants.

"Dr. Kernel." The doctor extends his hand, but Wispy doesn't return the gesture.

"Just have a seat, anywhere you'd like. If you'd like to lie down, well then, go right ahead." He withdraws a pen from his breast pocket and begins to write on a clean note pad.

"So . . . how are you feeling since you've come here?"

"Fine," Wispy says, but he is mesmerized by the picture hanging on the wall.

"What are you looking at?"

Wispy raises his hand and points to the painting of the exotic creature.

"The bird."

"Oh . . . you like birds, do you?"

"Yeah."

"What do you like about them?"

"They're free."

"Free to do what."

"You know."

"No, I don't."

"Free to do whatever they want. Free to be where they want." Wispy hesitates, "Free to fly. Look, Doc, why all the questions? All I want to do is go back to my houses."

"Houses? How many houses do you have?"

"I don't want to talk to you anymore. I want to leave."

"All right then, but I do expect to see you again next week. I'll be waiting for an answer. Okay?"

"Yeah."

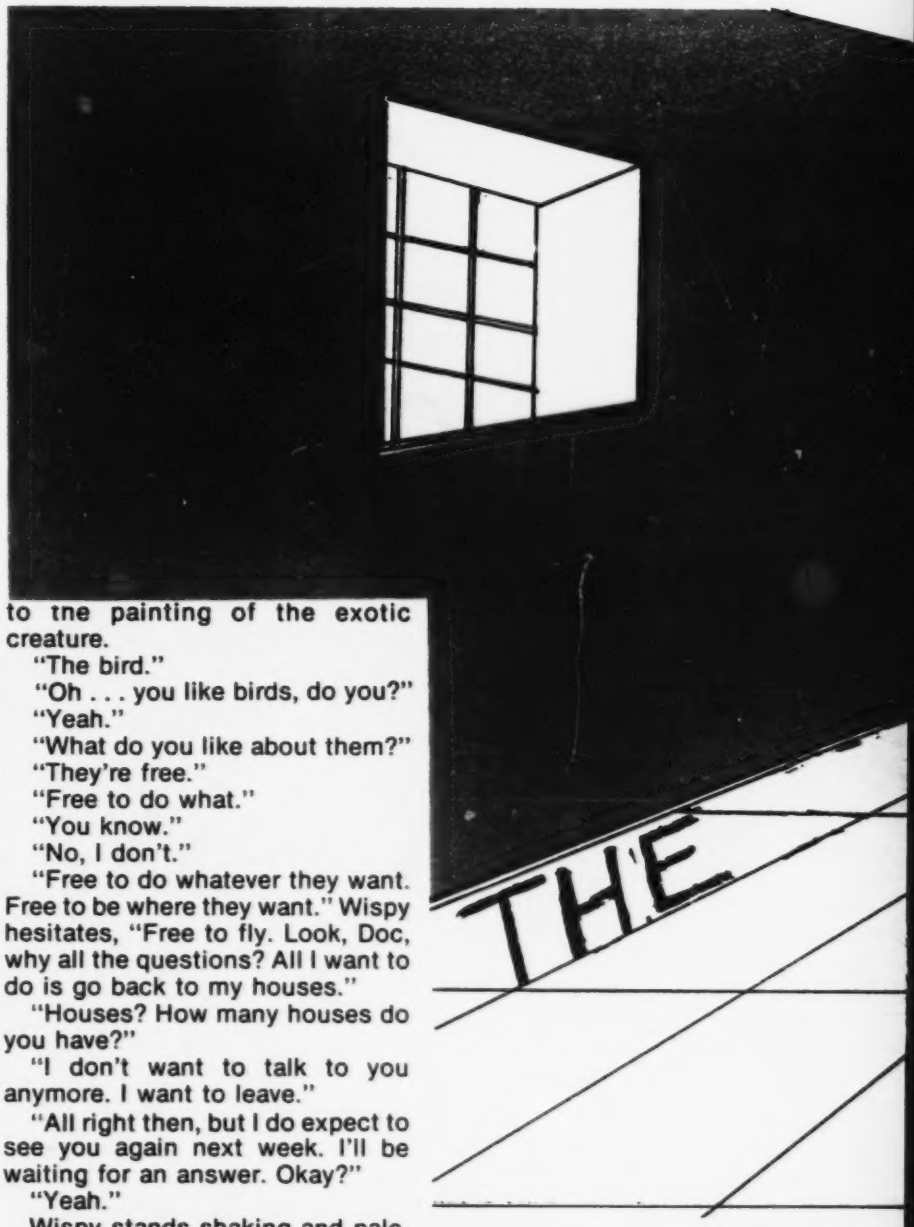
Wispy stands shaking and pale, his arms clenched tight around one another.

Dr. Kernel begins, "If you'd like, you can join the other patients in the dayroom. Maybe get to know a few people around here."

"Okay."

"It's just down the hall to the left."

They both walk to the door, and Wispy moves back into the cold hallway. His eyes search the floor; he is careful not to step on any cracks. The childhood game had become a habit. His friends used to say, "Step on a crack, break your mother's back!" But his father always said, "Oh son, it's just a bunch of nonsense. Kids don't know what they're talking about. Just don't pay them any attention, and do what you want to do." Wispy would just laugh, but the words always stayed with him. He remembers his father best in his Air Force uniform, the glorious, gold wings neatly sewn on his cap. When his father wasn't watching, he would stand in front of the mirror with that cap on and dream of the day he would fly like his father. One day as Wispy had stood in front of the mirror, his small fingers gripped tight around the outer rim of the cap



—Shannon Boshears

and scenes of fighter planes flashing in his head, his father had caught him.

"Wispy?"

"Dad? what are you doing home?"

His father was standing in the doorway with his eyes fixed on the cap.

"What are you doing?" his father said.

"I was just, uh, looking at your hat."

"Well look Wispy, my uniform isn't something for you to play with. Let's not do it again. When you get older, you can get your own wings."

Wispy's eyes had sparkled with the idea, but all hope for his dream had ended when he flunked out of the Air Force Academy as a young cadet.

"Mr. Skyler? Are you okay? Did you hear me? I said it is time to take your medicine!"

Wispy sits in the dayroom in a tweed chair set at the base of a small window where the bars grow out from the white, chipped paint. The colossal woman towers over him and forces two flimsy paper cups into his hands.

"What's this?" Wispy asks puzzled.

"It's your medicine, as ordered by the doctor."

"Why do I need medicine? I'm not sick."

"Look here, Mr. Skyler, just don't ask questions, and I won't give you any problems."

To free himself from her, he quickly places the pills on the back of his tongue and chases them with water.

He watches a tiny black lady enter the room. Her hair is pulled up into sponge curlers. She is wearing a blue flower print robe and pink houseshoes. Under her arm she carried a record album of the musical hits by the Boston Pops. She wobbles to the corner of the room where a small, scuffed record player is set up, and she carefully pulls the album from its sleeve and rests it upon the turntable. Her hand shakes uncontrollably as she moves the needle arm onto the disc. She turns on the record player, and the theme from *Born Free* begins to play. She sings along in a scratchy voice, no better than the pair of blown speakers. "Born free, as free as the wind blows . . ." She hums the words she does not know until the last note is played. She returns the record to its cover and leaves the room but not before making sure she looks at every person to see for herself that nobody is watching.

Wispy's attention is immediately caught by the quiet chirping of a bird. His eyes shift to sections of the room until he spots it. A yellow parakeet is perched upon a swing inside an oval top, wire cage that is set on a simulated wood table. He leaps up and sprints to the other side of the room and reaches out with both arms to free the bird from imprisonment when he feels a violently abrupt pain across his chest. He falls backward but braces himself by propping his elbows against the floor. A bald, middle-aged man sits with his wooden cane ready to strike again at the next person in reach.

"Don't even think of trying to steal my bird. Don't come near me either or I'll pop you again."

Wispy, still on the floor, stares wide-eyed at the man.

"He wants to be free!" Wispy screams. "He wants to fly!"

"Why must you young people be so anxious to get other people's things?" the man begins. "Why don't you just keep to yourself and let me sit here in peace without your constant screaming about my bird. What do you know anyway?"

Wispy stands and calmly brushes himself off. He turns to go back to the tweed chair and dives straight onto the cage. The bald man jumps up and begins to strike Wispy across the shoulders and head with the handle of his cane. Wispy frantically works to open the door of the cage on the floor under him and free the parakeet. He swings it open, reaches inside and cups the body of the bird in his left hand. He pulls his arm out, throws the bird upward and yells "FLY!" But instead of flying, the bird is stopped by the curved handle of the cane, and it is thrown

to the ground, wings spread open. Its head is cocked outward, and its beak is smashed.

Wispy awakes in a small, canvas room with his arms wrapped around him and tied at the back. He sees a blurred Dr. Kernel on the edge of his bed.

"Wispy? How do you feel?"

"What happened?"

"We had to take you out of the dayroom because you were disturbing the other patients. You want to tell me about it?"

"I was just trying to let the bird be free to fly. He was in a cage and he wanted out."

"How do you know what he wanted?"

"I just did. I know it was the right thing. Doc, can't you get me out of this place?"

"Tell me Wispy, do you know why you were put here to begin with?"

"I haven't really figured that out yet. I was just out one night getting another house in someone's yard and . . ."

"Another house? What do you mean?"

"You know, a bird house. Anyway, the next thing I know they're putting me in the back seat of a police car."

"Do you always do this sort of thing?"

"What?"

"Collecting bird houses from people's yards."

"Well, I usually try at least every night, but I only get lucky about once a week, sometimes twice. It just depends on how well the house is built. You know, if it's on a pole, a tree, or what have ya."

"How many do you have?"

"153. When I ran out of space on my roof I just kept them inside, and I always left my window open in case I had any unexpected visitors."

Dr. Kernel smiles and nods at Wispy.

"Good, very good. You seem to be feeling better. I think you can be given back some privileges."

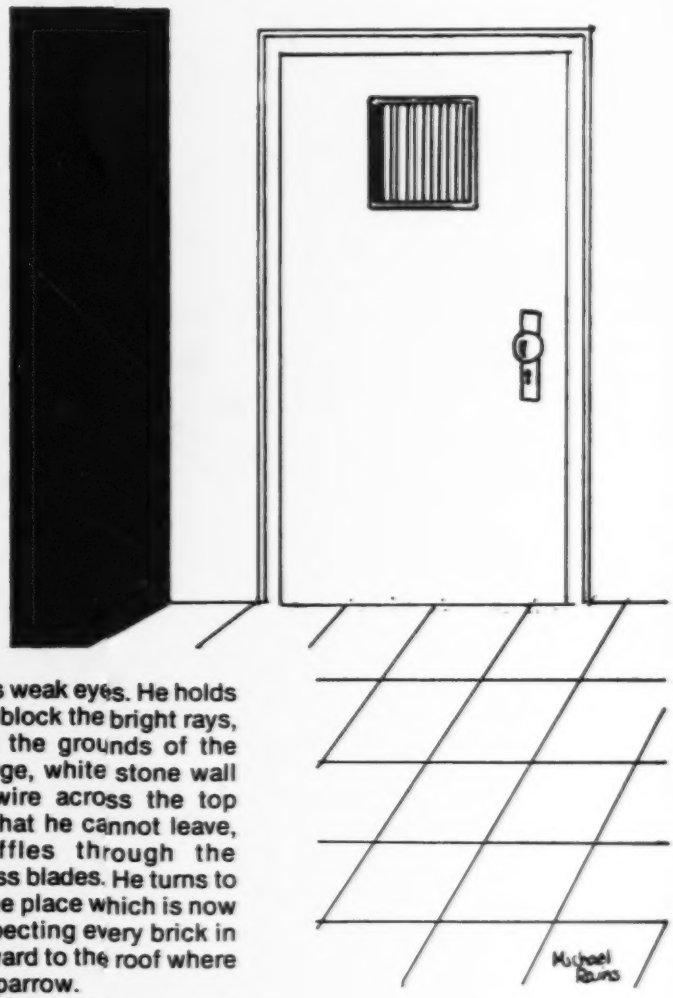
He helps him out of his jacket of straps and locks, and they walk slowly toward the door.

"Would you like to go outside on the front lawn and be outside for a while?"

"Yes. I'd like that."

"Good. Then go right ahead."

Wispy anxiously forces open the glass doors of the building. The sun is painful to his weak eyes. He holds his hand up to block the bright rays, and he scans the grounds of the hospital. A large, white stone wall with barbed wire across the top reminds him that he cannot leave, and he shuffles through the manicured grass blades. He turns to look back at the place which is now his home, inspecting every brick in it. He look upward to the roof where he sees the sparrow.



"Bird! My God! You've come back! Oh, I knew you wouldn't leave me alone here. I love you bird! Stay there, I want to be with you!"

He runs over to a drainpipe connected on the side of the building, and he begins to climb. First, he grasps the rusty metal with his hands, then pulls his body up, and his shaking knees bend in the unstable pipe. His knuckles scrape against the coarse bricks, and the blood from his hands runs down his arms as he reaches for another brick. "I've got to make it!" he cries. With the strength he has left he clenches his hands around the top ledge and slowly lifts his body up. His head begins to spin, and it throbs when he breathes in through his painfully dry mouth. Moving over to the sparrow, he reaches his bleeding hands out to touch it. But with a quick hop it soars off the top of the roof leaving Wispy standing with his arms dangling by his side while he looks down in amazement.

Why did you fly away? I just wanted to touch you. Wait a minute! I wanna come!" He steps back far enough to get a running start, gasps for a breath and then thrusts his body forward with his legs pushing at full speed. He leaps and dives into the air with his arms outstretched. His ecstatic laugh echoes across the grounds of the hospital. His body lunges into the moist grass, and blood spills out from his mouth and trickles down from his nose. His arms are still stretched out, and he lies prostrate on the lawn. The sparrow lights beside him. It cocks its head sideways to look at Wispy, and its eyes twitch as it turns to fly over the white walls of the Kittyhawk Sanitorium.

Farewell, Mr. Van Gogh

—Amy Ward

The sterile, stale odor hung heavily in the air of the white, rectangular room, a smell so familiar to Henry that even without opening his eyes he could tell which nurse had checked on him during the night, what time of day it was, and who was working the day shift. It was midmorning. He strained to lift eyelids over his groggy eyes. The dose of tranquilizers must have been more than usual, for his body felt excessively rigid and weak. His head lay motionless on the starched white pillow like the centerpiece on a white table. What had once been dark, curly hair was now thin, pale gray whisps smoothed timidly over his pink head. A broad forehead furrowed with lines loomed over pale eyebrows, once also dark and bushy. Under the eyebrows were large, deep-set eyes, a murky blue. They, too, had faded with age. His eyes held the expression of a silent wizard, his power broken by the rejection. Henry focused on the picture hanging on the wall opposite his bed. It was a reproduction of a Van Gogh painting he had bought twenty years ago. It was one of the few possessions he had in his room. Henry and his wife, Emily, had bought the print in Chicago while they were on vacation. It had been hanging on this wall for ten years, since he had come here. He remembered that time vaguely. As he studied the picture, he realized that he couldn't remember the name of it. Imagine that, the thought Emily would know, she was always good with names.

With some effort he lifted a white, spidery hand to the button on the wall and pressed it to signal Gloria, the day nurse, that he was awake. This was the daily routine. But today, Henry realized, would not be ordinary. Today was his last day here. He was able to leave voluntarily. He heard the footsteps of the nurse approaching and knew that he would be saying goodbye to Gloria, who had always reminded him so much of his daughter. When his wife and daughter could not bear to visit him any more, it had been Gloria who had restored his spirits, and who had provided friendship in the cold world of doctors and white linoleum. The door opened, and in came the nurse. To his surprise, however, it was not Gloria. It was instead a very young woman with a halo of frizzy blond hair. Standing in the doorway she looked at Henry cautiously.

"Where's Gloria?" Henry asked.

"She's transferred to St. Theresa's. I'm the new day nurse. My name's Linda."

"I'm leaving today, anyway, so it really doesn't make any difference. Why did Gloria leave?"

"I don't know, Mr. Jordan. Probably for a bigger salary."

"No, Gloria always said that money was not important to her." Henry could feel the anger edging up through his body like a slowly burning flame. It offended him to hear the new nurse say that about Gloria. She obviously didn't know her. A wave of confusion and defeat accompanied the anger, forcing Henry to turn his face away. He stared out of the window. Gloria had known that today was his last day. How could she leave without saying goodbye?

"Yes, I'll certainly be glad to leave this place," Henry said.

"Let me know if there's anything I can get you."

Reluctantly, Henry sat up, pulled back the pale blue blanket and lifted his legs out bed. The floor was cold under his bare feet. He walked to the sink with stiff steps. His joints felt immobile and hollow. The tranquilizers definitely had begun to affect him. One thing he knew he would not miss was the blasted tranquilizers. He could once again enjoy sleeping when he wanted to, not when he had to. He smiled to himself thinking how nice it would be to be home again, sitting in his comfortable chair in the living-room reading *Harper's* in the evenings while Emily practices her Chopin. He could smell the coffee brewing in the old, cozy kitchen, and he couldn't wait to start working on the rose garden out back. In all this time he had not thought of home. Not once. He could barely remember what it was like to live normally. He could barely remember what it was like to hold Emily in his arms. That's the first thing I'll do, he thought, hold Emily and tell her how much I've missed her.

He opened the small closet and reached for his suitcase. It was dusty and worn. He had had the same luggage since college. On the side of the faded brown leather, engraved in gold was, "Henry S. Jordan." He pressed down on the clasps to open the suitcase and began to pack his things. He carefully laid out his blue suit and white shirt, which was a bit wrinkled, but not worth ironing. Too much time. He walked to the sink again and looked in the mirror. Running his hand over his face, he decided that he needed to shave the white stubble on his chin. After dressing and combing his hair, he walked to his bed and retrieved the small, wooden box under it. Inside was $350, which he had saved over the years. This money would get him back home, back to Emily. He looked about him and decided to leave behind what little he had besides his suitcase. He opened the door, took one last look at the

. . . It looked refreshing and friendly, and he could barely keep from running up the steps to the door.

dreary room, then one last look at the Van Gogh picture. He still couldn't remember the name of it. He smiled, picked up the suitcase, and walked out. The staff all wished him well and a safe trip home. One of the porters would drive him to the bus station. In a way, he was glad that Gloria was not there after all.

He arrived at the bus station a bit dazed. It had been ten years since he had seen the outside world. He felt like a stranger trapped in time. The people looked a little different. Ten years is a long time. He bought a one-way ticket to New Haven for one hundred-sixty dollars. The woman behind the desk eyed Henry curiously, as if she knew he had been away. The bus was not crowded. He was happy to be sitting by himself. Across the aisle a man was eating beer nuts and looking out of the window. Henry had always hated buses, but there was no other way to get to New Haven. Two days on a Greyhound would be miserable, but bearable. At each stop, new passengers got on. On the second day almost every seat was occupied. He talked very little. One woman resembled Emily quite a bit. But unlike his wife, this woman was cold and withdrawn. She wanted little to do with Henry. It seemed to Henry that no one wanted to have anything to do with anyone.

Finally, it was time to get off at New Haven. He gathered up his suitcase and umbrella and waited for a taxi to take him home. After forty-five impatient minutes, a young taxi driver drove up. The boy looked almost too young to have a driver's license.

"Please take me to 369 West Ash Street," Henry said.

"Okay, but that'll cost ya ten bucks."

"Perfectly all right." As the car drove past the college, Henry wondered if he might be able to get his job back in the History Department.

The sun was setting, leaving a reddish glow on the city's autumn trees. He was beginning to feel anxiety as the taxi drove down Ash Street toward his house. In a few moments he would be home with Emily. The taxi pulled over and stopped.

"This is it, mister."

"Thank you," Henry said as he handed him a twenty dollar bill, "Keep the change."

The old Victorian house looked the same. The porch still needed to be painted. But it looked refreshing and friendly, and he could barely keep from running up the steps to the door. The downstairs lights were on. He could imagine Emily inside fixing dinner. He let out a happy laugh as he climbed the stairs of the porch. He put down the suitcase, straightened his tie, and rang the doorbell. His heart was racing, and perspiration was collecting on his forehead. A young pregnant woman opened the door. She stood in the doorway looking at Henry.

"I'm looking for Emily Jordan," Henry said with a smile. "Is she home? I'm her husband."

"Who?"

"Emily. Emily Jordan. This is my house. She lives here."

"You must have the wrong address, sir. There's no one here by that name."

"No! You're wrong. This is my house! Please get Emily . . . tell her I've come back!" Henry looked over the woman's shoulder to see a man come to the door.

"Nick, this man is looking for someone named Emily. Claims he's her husband. Do you know of anyone named Jordan?"

"No. Look, I'm sorry, but there's no one here named Emily. And this can't be your house, either. We've been living here for eight years. Goodbye."

Henry was dumbfounded. He staggered down the stairs to the edge of the street. A cold wind was blowing from the north. An eerie, empty, hollowness came with the rustling of the trees. So he wept helplessly, he looked up at the red sky flecked with blowing leaves. Everything was a twisted distortion, like the harsh brush strokes in Van Gogh's painting. The clouds were heavy and churning. A twisting turmoil of brick-red bewilderment encompassed him in its whirling path. Henry imagined the painting hanging safely on the wall of his white-washed room. He finally remembered the name. Motionless, he stood on the curb and said aloud, "The Park of the Insane Asylum."

I Remember

I miss the long, quiet days
When I could count my steps
And catch the leaves before they hit the ground.
We played touch-football on the lawn,
Our lungs full up with the cold late-autumn air,
We'd run home for lunch as the church bells rang.

I miss the summers in the Keys,
The sun on our backs as we reeled in the deep sea fishing lines,
The old captain's hat I used to wear
When I walked alone to the end of the pier,
The gulls perched high on the white rocks.

—John Buffalo

Forthefunofit

My bright green lopsided ball rolls
Off the artificial rubber mat tee,
Down a path of crushed felt.
It speeds down the covered concrete,
Without the skillful hold of grass.

It smashes into the fluorescent orange barrier
With no true crack of a tree's branch,
No soft bounce back into the fairway.
Just a metallic thonk and a carom into a tight corner.

It's trapped against a metal wall,
the artificial rough.
I have no nine iron to dig it out.
I just move it six inches, tap it in.

I try to talley my score
With a cheap stubby pencil,
My scorecard slips off the oily writing stand,
I snap my pencil, toss my putter,
And dream of deep rough and soft bounces.

—Eric Barlund

Solo Recuerdo

Solo recuerdo que durante mi ninez
Yo estaba sentado sobre la arena jugando,
Haciendo castillos de arena
Viendo como vuelalu las gaviotas
Como se oculta el sol en elbrizonte
Como las olas van y vienen.

I Only Remember

I only remember during my boyhood,
I sat on the sand. I played,
Made castles of sand,
And watched
How the seagulls return
How the sun sets on the horizon
How the waves come and go.

—Cesar Pineda

Boys 12 and Under Freestyle

I stand on the starting block.
My arms and legs tight.
I begin to shake each individually
to loosen the tension.
My stomach muscles remain knotted.
I look down at the water.
Like a flickering candleflame, phosphorescent light
squiggles on the surface.
The pool spills over the edges.
The starter raises his gun, the crowd is hushed.
"Swimmers! Take your mark!"
My body mechanically bends over the starting block.
"Get set!" I raise my head,
"Go!"
My body uncoils and fires forward.
I am suspended in the air
And I see only the opposite edge of the pool,
I feel my body stretched stiff.
Splash! I see cloudy images
and feel the cold, cold water.

—Doug Griep

by Shannon Boshears and Lee Quinn

For A Happier Ending

On the snow covered crest of old Kilimanjaro
In a cave by a fire as the suns slowly fading
There's a leopard asleep at the feet of poor Papa.

Mr. Hemingway writes by the light of the sunset
He's in Africa, Spain, or out fishing in Cuba,
With the great Joe DiMaggio, whisky and water.

He's writing the last ones, the saved ones he's chosen
And he'll write till he's finished, come morning he'll waken
And climb with the leopard up higher and colder.

In the springtime they'll find them there frozen alone
As the waters stream down in the warmth of the sun
He'll have died in the snow, as he should have.

—John Buffalo

by John Arrant

Bus Rider

Every day she mounts the bus
And flashes her worn card,
Her gleaming smile of white teeth,
Four ivories separated by a golden gap.

Her lips are parched,
Her eyes, a knowing brown,
Her hair, a course curly black.

Two cent Safeway brown bags jostle against her shawl,
As she waddles down the aisle.
She sits in the same spot,
She leaves at the same stop.

Methodically, she shuffles slowly to the front,
A tired driver yanks the unoiled door,
It squeaks shut.

She smiles at me through dusty glass.

—Eric Barlund

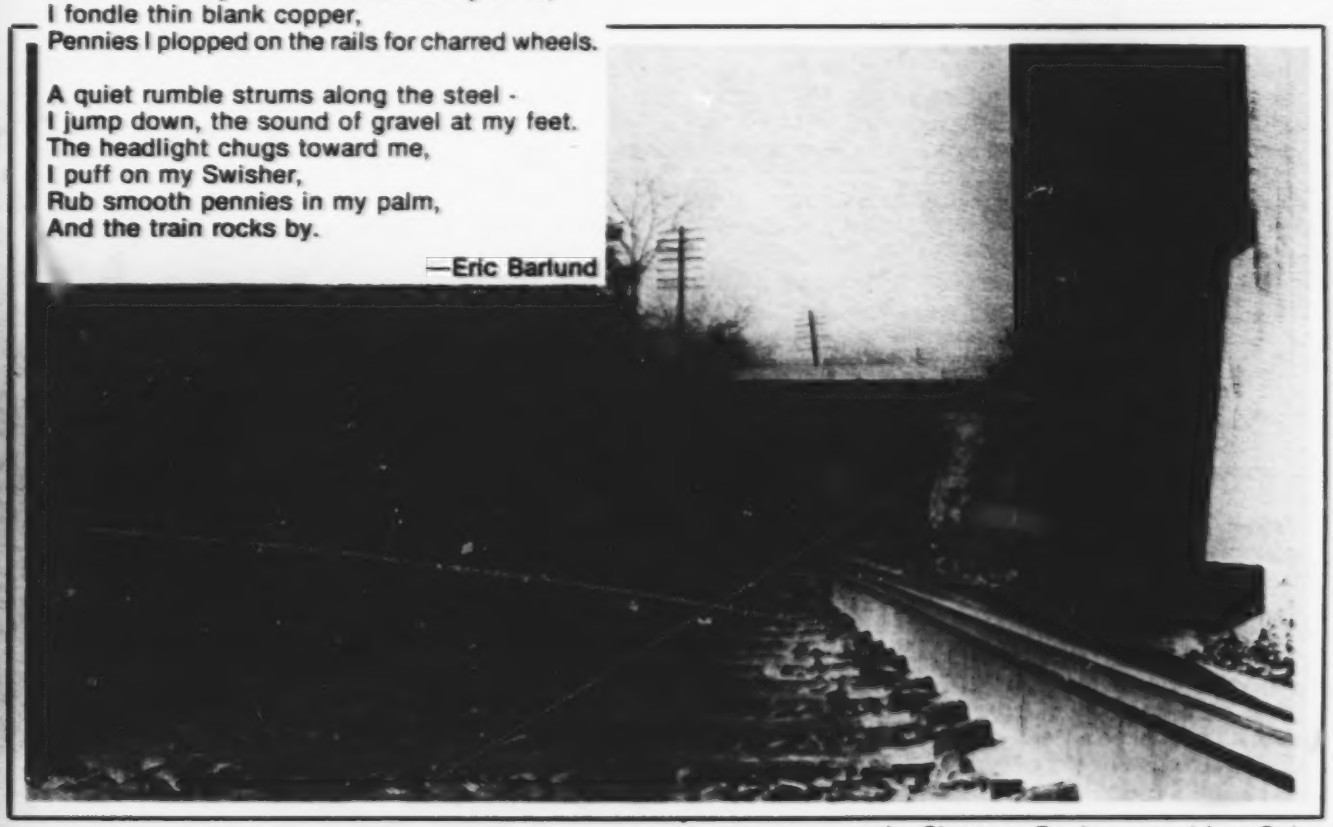
by John Arrant

Tracks

I sit on a cool concrete ledge,
The tracks gleam under the clouded moon,
The tar and greased rails glisten in its beam.
I play solitaire and smoke Swisher sweets
By the light of my cooking Coleman lantern.
Soft James Taylor tunes stroll in my head,
I fondle thin blank copper,
Pennies I plopped on the rails for charred wheels.

A quiet rumble strums along the steel -
I jump down, the sound of gravel at my feet.
The headlight chugs toward me,
I puff on my Swisher,
Rub smooth pennies in my palm,
And the train rocks by.

—Eric Barlund



by Shannon Boshears and Lee Quinn

NORWAY ARKANSAS

—Rikke Knudsen

I had never heard of Little Rock or Arkansas until a year ago, when I was told that I was going to live there as an exchange student. My parents had heard about Little Rock because of what happened at Central in 1957. Not many people here know where Norway is and how it is to live there. I often get questions that I think sound stupid. "Do you have cars?" or "Do you know what pizza is?" In Norway, we hear about the U.S. everyday through the radio, T.V. and newspapers. But I didn't know the people were so different. People here act, think, and behave differently in many ways from what they do in Norway. One main reason they are so different is because of the climate. Norway has really cold and dry weather compared to Arkansas. The snow arrives at the end of October and doesn't leave until the end of April. The cold weather makes the people stay inside more during the winter and outside during the summer. Unfortunately the summer only lasts two months, so the winter gets very long. I think also that family life is different because of that reason. Since families are together so much, they are closer in many ways. They really have to learn how to put up with each other.

Generally, religion is much more important to the people here than in Norway. Here it is common to go to church at least once a week. In Norway, it is common to go once a year on Christmas Eve. I am amazed to see how many young people here look at religion as "black and white." People here seem to be more narrow-minded; a thing is right or wrong, nothing between. They try to fit the *Bible* to today's society without realizing that it was written for 2000 years ago and that it must be interpreted to fit today.

In Norway, children start in the first grade when they are seven years old at what we call "Children's School." That school is from the first to the sixth grade. Then they start in "Teenager School" or high school, which is from the seventh to ninth grade, and then they graduate. We have to go to school only nine years, compared to twelve years here. After "Teenager School" most teenagers start in Gymnasium. Gymnasium is like a pre-college. In order to go to the Gymnasium, a student has to have good grades. This is an advantage for some people, but a disadvantage for others. A good thing is that students don't have to pay to go there; it is financed through taxes. Teenagers are more mature in Norway than here, and I think that the school is the main reason. We really have to be serious in the ninth grade in order to make our grades to get a place in Gymnasium. It doesn't help that a person's dad has a lot of money; the teenager has to do it himself.

One thing that is different in the school is the foreign languages. In Norway, we are required to take five years of English; and in eighth grade, we can choose if we want another language.

There are two things that I don't like about Central. The first is that I need a pass wherever I go. I sometimes feel like a child in kindergarten; nobody trusts me. In Norway, I could even write my own excuses. The second thing I don't like is the grading system. I get five points if I do that and ten points if I do this. Participating during classes doesn't count on my grade.

We don't have football teams and cheerleaders. I think that football takes up too much of the education. Another thing is that it is a game of organized violence, and I definitely don't like that. Also, here students play to be the best instead of for fun.

I believe that there is much more drinking and using of drugs among the teenagers here than in Norway. We do have a big drug problem in Norway, but it is even bigger here. Drugs are accepted at parties and other places where teenagers are. It is not accepted in Norway. When my friends and I came to a party where drugs were used, we just left. But it is difficult to do that here, because then you can't go to *any* parties!

One of the main things that amazed me when I first came here was that people were driving everywhere. Every family seems to have at least two cars. I am used to riding the bus every day in Norway because no one can drive until they're 18, so the only way to get around is to ride the bus or train. Norwegians are also more conscious of saving energy and money.

People here are more polite than in Norway. We never say "Sir" or "Madame" to our mom or dad. Neither do we use people's last names as much as you do. I think it has just gone out of the language more or less. But we do consider it impolite not to introduce ourselves on the telephone. When we have eaten a meal, we tell the host or the one that made the food "thank you." Norwegian for *thank you* is "tusen takk."

Radio and T.V. are also different from in Norway. The government has a monopoly on both. That means one T.V. station sends programs from five in the afternoon until about midnight. The T.V. does not have any commercials, and the programs they send are very bad and often very old. People don't watch much T.V. in Norway because mostly it is news, sports, religion and debates. The radio station broadcasts twenty-four hours a day. They are broadcasting the same things as the T.V., but with a little more music. The radio station does not have any commericals either. We do have advertisements in newspapers and magazines, but they are not allowed to advertise cigarettes or alcohol.

One thing that disappointed me is the fashion in the United States. I thought that there would be beautiful clothes among teenagers, and that there would be one particular style or fashion.

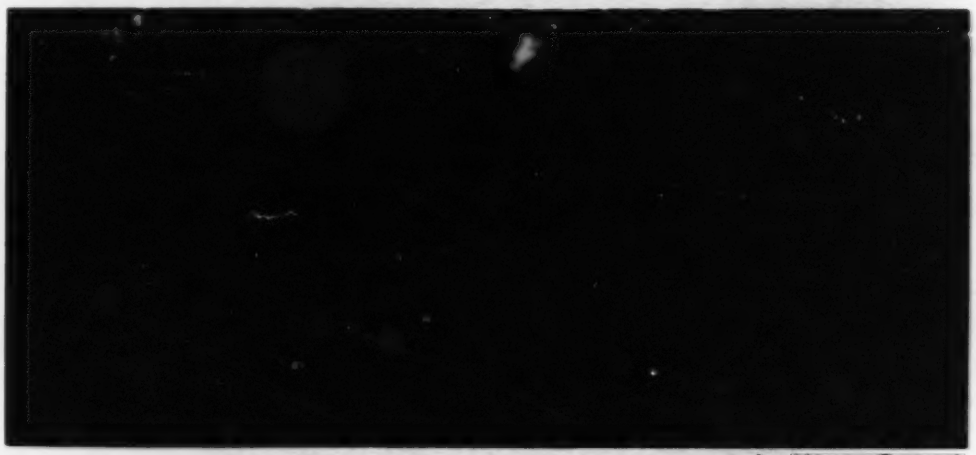
People here wear jeans, young and old. In one way, it is good to not have one particular fashion. In many schools, we have gangs, and to be a member of that gang, you have to have a "Polo" sweater or an "Izod" shirt, and that causes problems. Not everybody can afford to buy clothes that are that expensive!

The shopping malls are much bigger and better here than the ones we have in Norway. Another thing you have that we don't is all of the fast food restaurants, like McDonalds and Wendy's. Norwegians don't go out to eat as much because it is expensive.

Norway is a member of NATO, mostly because it is so near to the Soviet Union. If there were ever to be a war between the USA and USSR, Norway would be in the middle of it. I think there are more peace-thinking people in Norway than here in Arkansas. People here are aware of the USSR as the enemy, but they don't try to do anything about it.

Norway doesn't have many Black people, but we do have a lot of immigrants from Pakistan and India. We don't have many racial problems, but we do have some. The Pakistanis use the same schools, stores, cinemas, busses, et cetera, as the white population. Most Pakistanis do not speak or write Norwegian very well, and they don't have much education; so the Pakistanis get the least paid jobs and live in the cheapest part of town. But people in Norway are not poor like some people are here. We don't have anybody who starves or lives in the streets like some do here.

There are a lot of differences between the USA and European countries - culture, religion, and language. But what really has amazed me is all the similarities there are. People share the same needs, dreams, hopes, and fantasies. My experience is that there are bad as well as nice and friendly people all over the world. I think that American people are especially friendly and helpful. Thanks to all of them I have had a great year here and have learned a lot. I now know that people are people all over the world; in the basics we are all the same - we all have feelings and personalities.



by Hanna Bartsch

My Summer Job

—Rose Ann Barnhill

It was a late run. I got the portable x-ray into the truck and we left. The clock read 10:34 when we arrived, but it was 10:26. Doc always kept the clock in the truck eight minutes fast. Setting up for the x-ray, I looked at the foal that lay motionless on the stall floor.

"We came out to feed, and she was just laying there on the floor," Hydie said. "My daughter and I tried to get her up, but her leg must be broken!"

"The break is in the back left somewhere," Doc said examining the foal. "Let's try getting her up again."

We rolled the foal over to her right side. With our pushing, she came half the way up but fell back. After four tries we quit. Her body shivered and her eyes were wide open showing their whites. She was in shock.

"The break is too far up in the hip to fix, Hydie," Doc said as he kneeled beside the foal. "If she won't stand up now, she never will."

The light in the stall was dim, but I could see Hydie's face blanch as she fought the tears coming to her eyes.

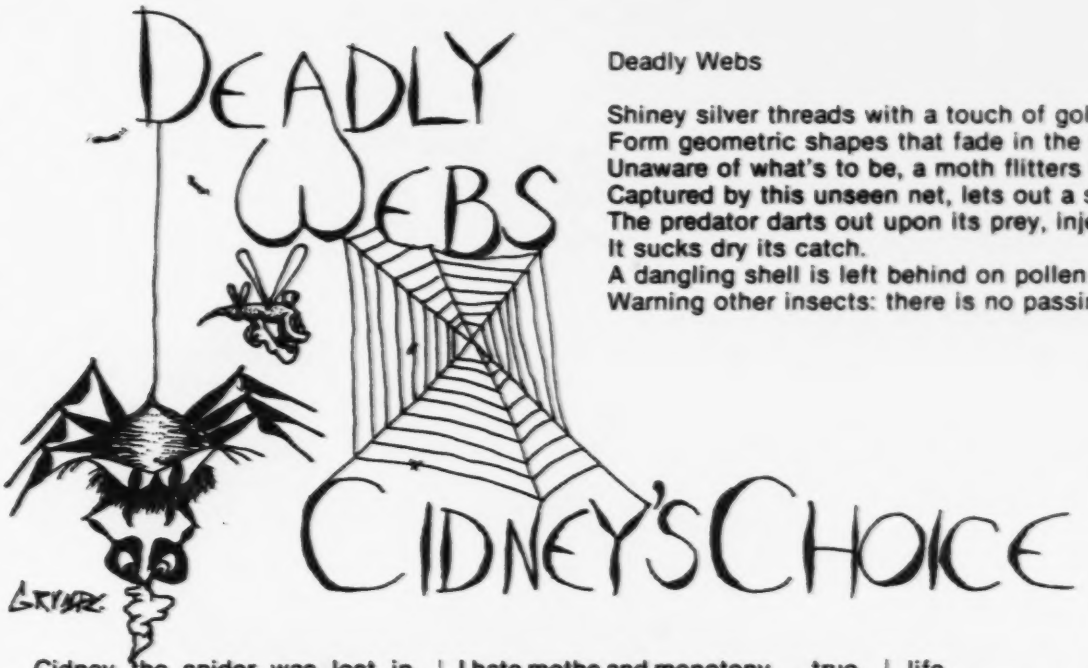
"Do what you have to do, Doc," she said looking down at the foal.

"Put the x-ray machine back into the truck, Rose Ann."

I followed him to the truck with the equipment and watched him fill a twenty CC syringe. My stomach knotted as I put the x-ray casettes on the floor of the truck. I knew what my part would be.

Doc looked at me. "Let's get it done," he said.

I got to my knees and put one hand over the foal's halter and the other one on the top of her neck. The needle went to fast. Doc never missed a vein. I felt a sharp pin on the back of my neck. I knew the foal was going into convulsions; I braced myself. Her eyes turned back and she pawed violently at the air and ground. Then she was still.



Deadly Webs

Shiney silver threads with a touch of gold
Form geometric shapes that fade in the sun
Unaware of what's to be, a moth flitters by,
Captured by this unseen net, lets out a silent cry
The predator darts out upon its prey, injects its toxic fluid
It sucks dry its catch.
A dangling shell is left behind on pollen coated twine
Warning other insects: there is no passing by

—Paul Grundl

—Barry Lake

Cidney the spider was lost in deep thought when he felt his dinner arrive. He was perched on the hub of his web when the violent jolt of an insect stayed in mid-flight surged through the tiny but strong fibres of his web and awoke him from his reverie. He reacted instantly, heading for his prey. The insect struggled in vain to free itself from its silken prison before Cidney reached it. Ironically, it was this struggling which led Cidney directly to the insect. It was always that way with the insects of lesser intelligence. Invariably, they struggled, and Cidney found them.

When Cidney reached the insect on the perimeter of his web, he saw that it was a moth. Damn it! he thought. Another one of those dry, sour moths. The little nourishments I get from these wretched powderlings is scarcely enough to be worth the effort it takes to subdue them and then to eat them. Oh, well, I may as well get used to eating the tasteless things because they're about the only food I get way up here between these two trees. But why should I settle for a dry moth when I could have a moist, juicy bug? Yes, that's what I'll do . . . I'll go to the ground level to spin a new web and capture many delectable delicacies . . . No, the ground level is dangerous. It has many predators and huge beasts to blunder through my web. I'd better stay here . . . but I hate moths and monotony . . . true, but I also love life too much to throw it away . . . Yes, but what is life but a risk?

All the while that Cidney was discussing with himself where he should live, he was dispatching the moth. He turned the captive with his first three pairs of legs while the fourth pair pulled silk from his spinnerets and wrapped the victim tightly. While the moth still struggled, Cidney injected it with a poison to render it unconscious. Then he carried it to the center of his web, where the moth would rest, entrapped in its straight jacket, until Cidney was ready to eat it.

When dinnertime arrived, Cidney was not at all gleeful about his meal. Reluctantly, he sank his fangs into the comatose moth and injected a strong digestive enzyme which dissolved the moth's innerds. Then Cidney drank, detesting every drop. It was the worst moth that he had had yet. Cidney decided then and there to seek out a new life.

Abandoning his old web, Cidney lowered himself to the ground on a dragline. Immediately, he saw more life around him than he used to see in a week up in his lofty home. Another delight besides the abundant variety of food was the presence of spiderettes. Though he could see none at the moment, their fragrant aroma tantalized him. He knew he would have fun in his new life.

He wove a new web near the ground, and almost immediately snared a grasshopper. Though Cidney had never seen such a creature before, he enjoyed it greatly. It was a delicious change of taste. For several days, Cidney gorged himself on all the new and exotic foods. He wondered why he hadn't come down to the ground earlier.

After a time Cidney began to crave companionship. He resolved to look for a mature spiderette. He found the web of a worthy prospect and announced his approach by plucking a strand of her web. She played very hard to get, though. Cidney became only more determined. He presented his heartthrob with a fly (wrapped, of course). The gift worked. She accepted him.

Cidney, however, did not know that she was a sheet web spider and was living with one of her kind. He caught Cidney in the act of spidultery and a horrible battle ensued. Cidney came out the loser and perceived that the couple would eat him, for he had felt himself being injected with poison. As he passed from consciousness, he felt no regrets. He had enjoyed his days on the ground. It is better, he thought, to have lived a short but full life rather than one of monotony and moths. With that thought, Cidney passed out of mind.

The Sparrows

From your window I watch the sparrows
that come down through the fine gray air
and eat the very birdseed
we put out, together, with our hands.

In my fog-breath on the glass I trace fast-fading circles
our initials vanish in the breath and air we move through
the very space which separates you from me
pushes each of us bird-like and airborn.

From your window I know where we stood
and tempted the birds to come down and feed
in the air burning day-light, among the folding of wings,
both of us more solid to each other than reality.

I have the urge to call you now
and say, "come put out birdseed"
so that we rest our hands on the edge of the feeder
together, where the birds land.

—Caitlin Scott

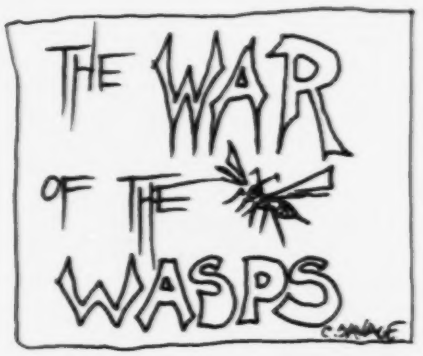
Waiting for The Big Catch

There I stand
in the midst of the day
I wait for the big catch.
I can feel him as he comes
I wait patiently as he nibbles.

He grabs my hook,
I start to reel him in.
What power he exerts.

I pull him into my boat
I notice how small a fish
I have caught standing there
Waiting a whole day for the big catch.

—Raphael Meadors



—Chad Savage

It all started when I formed the R.O.W.H., the Royal Order of Wasp Haters. This little group was composed of two of my friends, Chris Barton and Kevin Goodwin, and me. Cautiously, we would go down into the forests surrounding Walton Heights, and armed with cans of Raid, water pistols, and specially constructed wasp-whackers, or wooden fly-swatters. Untold hundreds of the evil creatures fell prey to our merciless campaign, until the day we happened upon their stronghold. We didn't realize what we were getting into as we quietly took out their sentries, and they had sprung a surprise attack before we could react. Forced to retreat, stung in several places, we watched our hated foes swarm back to their evil colony, but we weren't about to give up. It was time to call out the "SECRET WEAPON," my Dad's brand new water-hose. We inched our way toward the awaiting Fortress of Doom, dragging the water hose behind us. When we were in position, Chris, back at the faucet, released the tide that was to be the enemy's downfall. We blew away the entire nest and the majority of the enemy's troops before they could get any fighters into the air. At least a hundred of them swooped down on Kevin and me, but we were prepared. The beggers were met by a cloud of chemically treated water and Raid, and the few who escaped this first line of defense were no match for the wasp-whackers that awaited them. After it was over, we cleaned up the battle-ground, buried the dead, and went out to celebrate our victory.

—Chad Savage

The Master of The Crowd

The crowd went crazy as Townshend took the stage,
He raised his arm and
Fifty thousand people screamed in ecstasy.
He brought it down in his patented windmill,
The lights flashed,
The singer screamed,
The crowd screamed.
Townshend bent over his guitar and
Played a long intricate solo
The crowd listened
Like they were at a symphony.
Then he lifted his arm again,
Brought it down,
And the crowd went wild once more.
The guitar was Townshend's instrument.
He played it like a master.
The crowd was Townshend's instrument.
He was the master.

—Ross Cranford

Skipping

Scary and lonely 'cause everyone's in class
Should I go home or stick around?
Scared of the police
Mother's at the office or
At home when I get back.
I wait for her to say something
To see if she knows.
There's not too many places to go
Far enough away to not get caught but close enough
To get back in time.
If you're behind the stadium you'll never make it.
During the assemblies is best.
Come around the corner - O.T. and Jimmy White Shoes, the Famous Detective.
Just go and sit down and wait at the washateria
Or walk around and think about the class and what they're doing.
There's a tree over there where they smoke joints but I've never been,
I just hang around, sometimes in the gym
But Mrs. Betty threw me out one time.
Some people go home and watch T.V.
Got to let the time run out.
Come in around through the band room door,
Sit on the stairs,
Maybe I'll go back in class and throw a lie
But she'll throw a document.
The bell's gone off, it's time to go.
Watch for the teacher in the hall
People ask, "Where was you?"
"Man, I was skipping."

3rd Period
Mrs. Jarman and Mrs. Gaddy

The DNA Molecule

This strand patterns the world,
At least a billion in a flea.
Long and coiled like a snake.
It makes you, you and me, me.

—Brent Crawford

In My Closet

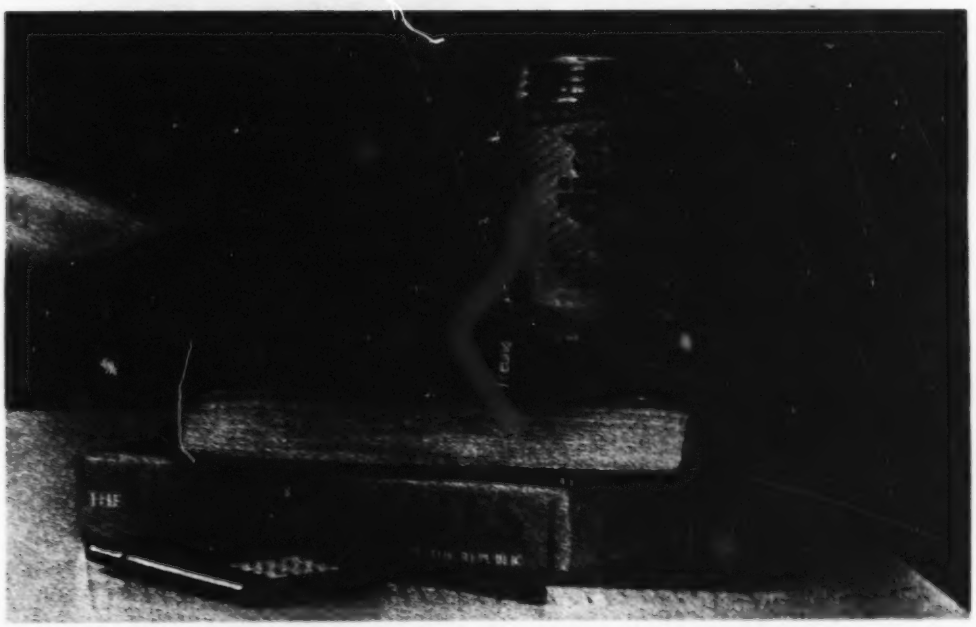
Mingled together
the cold, wire hangers
multiply.

—Jane Colclasure

Old Classroom

No one likes to go into that room
The students walk on by
as if it isn't there.
Inside paint peels
off the walls,
Paper and pencils on the floor,
Dirty desks need to be washed.
Even the plastic plants have withered.

—Mickie Hampton



by Shellie Fletcher

Movie Review:

MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL

—Eric Barlund

Like a non-sequitur in a perfectly written research paper, Monty Python and the Holy Grail is a refreshing twist of humor. Not a conventional slapstick, this rather is an absurdist's absurdity, mixing imagination with British cheek for form a stylish, no ryhme or reason comedy. This non-sequitur fits and twists the Middle Ages into a comical farce.

Michael Palin and John Cleese, as well as the rest of the crew, combine to make a truly hilarious movie ridiculing many peculiarities of the middle ages.

Battle, violence, chivalry, and religion are just a few of the elements in early English society that Monty Python spears in jest. Pointed cynicism pervades the film. Python reduces a seige on a French castle to an absurd tossing of farm animals over the castle walls. This flying menagerie is an effective substitute for arrows; Arthur and his men from Camelot flee from the castle to the coward's cry of "Run Away! Run Away!"

Chivalry is portrayed as an inane code of ethics having no function whatsoever in society. When Arthur wishes to cross a bridge he is confronted by the Black Knight. The ensuing "momentous" challenge becomes a farce. Arthur slices the knight's arm off, and blood spurts from his left shoulder stump like an irregular fountain, complete with watery fake blood. After the knight proclaims that this "is but a mere flesh wound," Arthur proceeds to cut off both of the knight's legs and his other arm. The scene ends with Arthur trotting past the knight, who looks like a rotting human tomato. The knight screams for Arthur to return because he will "bite your knees off."

Since the Grail is a religious icon, many viewers could take the film as a sacreligious exploitation of a time gone by. Yet, Monty Python only exploits the idea of a search for something so vague and theoretical as a Holy Grail. It is as if the knights of the era expected to find it under a bush or in a hole in the ground, while it was really a religious perception or ideal.

This notion of the search for an idea as opposed to a solid object is pointed out in the scenes dealing with the knights of Nee, and with the bridgekeeper. Both scenes are turning points in the search for the grail.

The Knights of Nee, feared throughout the land, ask the defending knights to get them a tribute which is (of all things) a shrubbery. After a ridiculous scene the knights return with the shrubbery and then are asked to cut down the entire forest with a herring.

An example of the conversation between the Bridgekeeper and the knights at the Bridge of Death illustrates the absurd dialogue of the film. The knights must answer three questions correctly or they will be shot off into total oblivion.

Bridgekeeper: Answer me these questions three, dare the other side you see.

Lancelot: Ask me the questions bridgekeeper, I am not afraid.

Bridgekeeper: What is your name?

Lancelot: Sir Lancelot of Camelot.

Bridgekeeper: What is your quest?

Lancelot: To seek the holy grail.

Bridgekeeper: What . . . is your favorite color?

Lancelot: Blue

Bridgekeeper: Right, off you go.

At this point Sir Robin the cowardly, who has been listening intently, proclaims that "That's easy!" and he pompously struts up to the bridgekeeper.

Bridgekeeper: What is your name?

Robin: Sir Robin of Camelot.

Bridgekeeper: What is your Quest?

Robin: To seek the holy grail.

Bridgekeeper: What . . . is the capital of Australia?

(Pause and a quizzical look from Robin and then:)

Robin: I don't know that!

At this point he is shot off the bridge into the chasm of death.

The examples of absurdity are endless. A killer rabbit is used to guard the entrance to a cave. A magician is named simply "Tim." The end fits the film. An English bobby team breaks up a battle scene, and one of the patrolmen smashes his hand into the camera lens saying, "Awright, buddy, that's enough." We hear a muffled groan from the camera man, and then black film rolls across the screen. No credits roll, but the audience is left with aching sides from this zany and distinctively British satire.

Movie Review:

ALICE'S RESTAURANT

—Leslie McKenzie

"You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant."

As the lyrics to the theme song proclaim, there is something for every viewer who watches the movie *Alice's Restaurant*. It forces a guffaw, a tear, a shaken hand . . . a subtle blend of the tragic and comic, moral and immoral. This film will, with its own peculiar style, worm its way into the hearts of all moviegoers.

Although the film is, indeed, entitled *Alice's Restaurant*, neither the character Alice, nor her restaurant, is the principal character of the plot. Rather, Alice is an Earth Mother figure, holding her arms open to all, forgiving any transgression, upbraiding moral infractions. Alice and her boyfriend/husband (his role shifts midway through) operate a restaurant and live in a church steeple, whose bell is rung every time they consummate their marriage. It is to this setting that the various characters gravitate in time of hardship, happiness, or any other time the author feels a need for a change of plot.

The principal character of the plot is Arlo Guthrie, country music great Woody Guthrie's progeny. His shoulder length, ringleted mop of hair, saggy eyes, and widely spaced front teeth seen through a straight-line smile comprise a face that, like a pug dog's, is so ugly, it's precious. Guthrie, with his guitar and quiet voice, narrates adventures including an arrest, Alice and Ray's wedding, and a draft examination.

However, the movie is more than amusing, for it is a valuable representation of the turbulent decade of the '60's. While the events may be somewhat manufactured, the morals and ideals of the youth of this time permeate the plot.

On issue over which many people expressed views during this time was, obviously, the Vietnam War, and Guthrie is no exception. During the course of the film, he is called for the draft, so he packs his Volkswagon bus and heads for New York. An Army sargeant informs Guthrie that, "He's our man!" after Guthrie jumps up and down for several minutes shrieking, "I wanna kill. I wanna kill. I wanna kill! I wanna kill!!!" Perhaps his views are most adequately summed up as he says, "You want to know if I'm moral enough to join the Army, burn women, kids, houses, and villages, after being a litterbug!!" While such sarcasm certainly elicits a laugh, it also expresses Guthrie's disdain for the war.

If any theme or moral pervaded the Sixties, it is that of acceptance, of allowing others to be whoever and whatever they please. This quality is embodied in the characters of both Alice and Guthrie. When Arlo is "inspected, detected, injected, neglected," and eventually rejected, by the U.S. Army, he is placed on "Bench W" with "mother rapers . . . father stabbers . . . father rapers!" because of his criminal littering record. Within seconds Guthrie is at home with these shady characters, laughing and smoking, and ridiculing the Army officers.

Like the Sixties, *Alice's Restaurant* reeks of drugs, free sex, and defiance of authority, but unlike that decade, it is curiously void of violence and racial prejudice. Perhaps Guthrie is merely attempting to preserve the values of this time - perhaps trying to forget the "other half." Whatever the case, Alice's *Restaurant* is a sunny, happy movie, designed to make the viewer chuckle . . . and think.

—Chad Savage

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

—Caitlin Scott

The Rocky Horror Picture Show starts hours before the time printed in the paper. It starts in participants' bedrooms where they paint their faces with heavy make-up and pull on black stockings. It starts in grocery stores, where they buy rice to throw during the wedding scene, newspapers to keep themselves dry while it's raining on screen, and decks of cards to scatter when an actor shouts, "What's the big deal?"

To appreciate *The Rocky Horror Picture Show,* you must participate. The movie to a nonparticipating audience is a tasteless rock spoof of horror movies.

The plot, what there is of it, involves a pair of conservative betrotheds, stranded at a mysterious castle, who are converted to the inhabitant's life of decadent parties and kinky sex.

Taken by itself, without rice showering down and without streams of toilet paper gliding across the theater when an actor crashes through a bathroom, this movie is a perfect example of the artlessness and decaying values of today's society. With a participating audience, the movie becomes witty.

The high points of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* come from the audience itself. Therefore, one of the most enjoyable parts is "The Time Warp", a song sung to introduce the audience to the strange and colorful people who inhabit the castle. At the first strains of music, people rush to the aisles jumping over the seats in their excitement. The song is a rock version of the square dance. The audience takes their cues from the dancers on screen. Everyone dances, and no one is embarrassed when he steps on someone else. Something about this unconventionalism of dancing in a theater makes the audience crazy. They jump up and down flailing their arms and legs until the music goes flat like a broken phonograph. Then, they fall to the floor amid rice and newspaper. Though exhausted, somehow they pull themselves up and stumble back to their seats to continue shouting remarks across the theater. These remarks usually are jokes which have to do with the movie. One of the standards is to shout "Superman" when an actor whips off his glasses.

The content of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* should be overlooked. The theme is that normal people have the ability to take an ordinary theater situation and an idiotic, tasteless movie and fill it with their own vitality and humor.

Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" A Gothic Metaphor

—Conevery Bolton

A story in the tradition of classic gothic horror, William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is at the same time a character study of Miss Emily Grierson and an incorporation of many of Faulkner's feelings about his native south into a symbolic story. Miss Emily represents a woman falling apart because she cannot deal with the changing world and its rejection of her staunch adherence to tradition, drilled into her by her father; Faulkner uses her as an analogy for the South and its degradation from dignified and genteel into common and crass. "A

Rose for Emily" is a powerful story, both as imaginative and bone-chilling fiction and as a detailed study of the decay of a woman and a society.

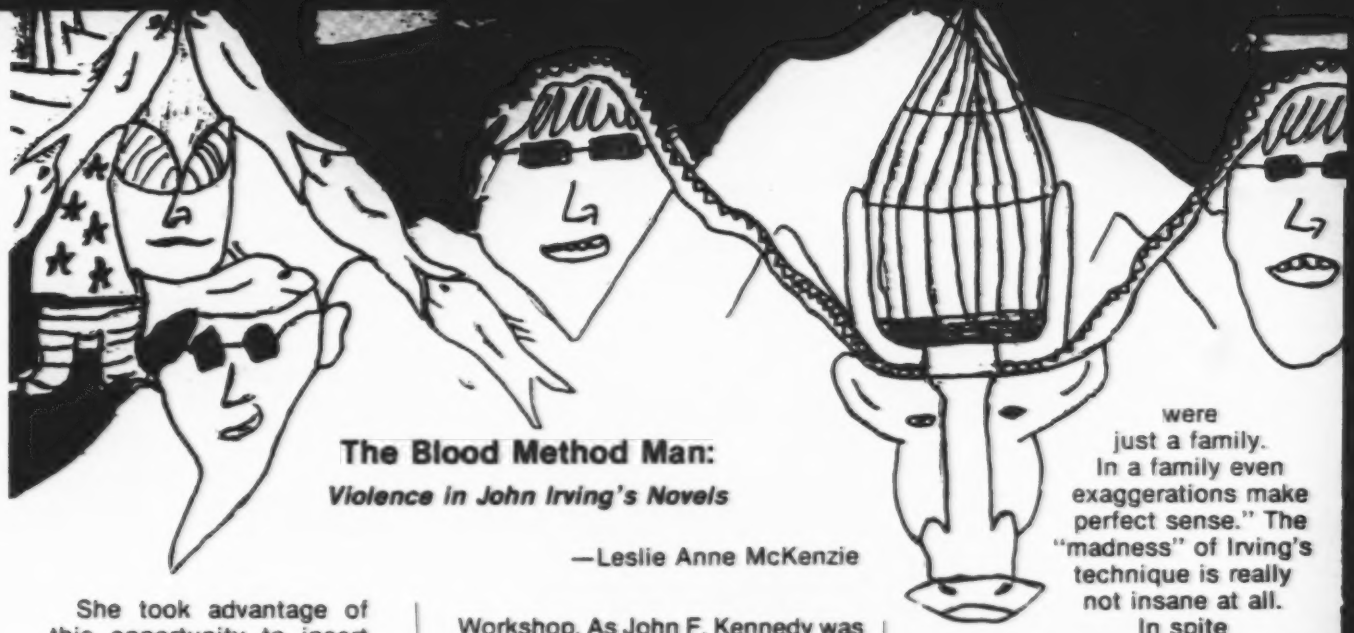
By Webster's definition, the term "gothic," as applied to fictional writing, means a story with two components: a "desolate and remote" setting and "macabre, mysterious, or violent" incidents. In "A Rose for Emily," the setting would not seem to be either desolate or remote, for it is a quite, gentle, small Southern community. However, the house of Miss Emily, which is the setting of primary importance, is indeed remote from the rest of the town, not by distance but by the isolation imposed on herself by Miss Emily, and the run-down, decaying mansion is desolate, holding no hope for new life or for a happy end to an old one. Thus Faulkner's story fulfills the first of the requirements of a gothic tale, although in a less literal sense than do *Frankenstein* or other archetypically gothic works.

In addition, "A Rose for Emily" is the tale of a macabre murder, a crime of horror because of the disparity between the murder and its author. It is not only in this, however, that the story is a gothic one; Faulkner's device of letting slip details which lead to a climactic - but not quite unexpected - end is one of gothic vintage. Faulkner leads the reader to assume that the character of his protagonist is exactly what the townspeople think it is, yet gradually he creates a startlingly different picture of Miss Emily as he reveals the details of her strange life. The climax of discovering the full extent of the woman's depravity is at first shocking, but then acceptable as the reader remembers the clues which make Miss Emily's behavior all to foreseeable: her buying the rat poison and the toilet set, the smell, the lime, and her strange love affair.

"A Rose for Emily" explores Emily Grierson's attempts to hold onto a false reality, to make her life fit the suffocating and restrained pattern set for her by her father and her strict society. Burdened by an overbearing father who drove away her beaux and forced her to live a life of impossible aristocracy, Miss Emily still clings to his demands and to the demands of convention. With the death of her father, Miss Emily becomes a recluse. Afraid to live a life of her own, she lives her father's, refusing herself her neighbors' company, resigning herself rather to desperate pride and dignity. When Homer Barron, the day-working Yankee, begins to court her, however, her hope for a more normal life is evident. By the end of the tale it is clear that the pressure to live up to her father's expectations and her knowledge that she has failed even to live up to her neighbor's expectations have torn Miss Emily apart, shattering the fine line between the real and the imaginary. Miss Emily creates for herself a world in which she can live as it befitted her class. She prevents herself from being disgraced by a lowly worker and claims for herself a bridgegroom safe forever from having to fit her father's standards.

William Faulkner was deeply disturbed by the crumbling of the old South, the South of gaiety and gallantry, balls and belles, caste and class. In his writing, he expressed his feelings about the betrayal of his native region. Miss Emily is a symbol of the decay of the Southen gentry and of the South as a whole. The grotesqueness of her stiff pride caricatures the South and its attempts to retain the old tradition against the new traditions of changing times. Miss Emily represents the preservation of an ancient symbol of the town, its living antique of gentility. In the same way the customs and dignity of a crumbling aristocracy are preserved in the South; a bit ridiculed but still awe-inspiring, both Miss Emily and the culture she represents are still given hesitant homage by the people in her community. Historically and sociologically, the Old South fell as Miss Emily does, swathed in it self-righteousness and in gross, hidden decay; Faulkner symbolizes and, through his gallant title, salutes the demise in "A Rose for Emily."

This gothic tales delves into the life of a person forced by an inability to adjust to change into insanity and thereby symbolizes Faulkner's feelings about the decline of the South and its perversion in trying to remain the same in the face of major cultural changes. "A Rose for Emily" is, on a literal level, a dramatic and gripping horror tale; on an insightful level it is a character study of Emily Grierson, and on a symbolic level it is a statement about one man's feelings toward the changes in his beloved native South.



The Blood Method Man:

Violence in John Irving's Novels

—Leslie Anne McKenzie

> She took advantage of this opportunity to insert the knife again . . . Oren Rath was emptying, by quartfuls—by gallons. He felt actually lighter on top of her . . . Hope's hair was gravid with blood—his throat had fountained over her.

The books of John Irving are permeated with gruesome scenarios such as the disembowelment of a man, described above, the gouging out of a child's eye, the pulverization of a radical's brain with a Louisville slugger, the amputation of a man's penis, the rapes of multiple females, and miscellaneous other atrocities; in fact, Irving's attraction-revulsion for such bloodspill is perhaps the most salient feature of his novels. His books, primarily *The World According to Garp* and *The Hotel New Hampshire*, are filled with this element of gore, Irving's most-denounced, least-understood literary device. While some critics feel that Irving writes his grotesqueries merely as an expression of the American life or as a form of sick humor, he is actually making a statement about the temporality of human life.

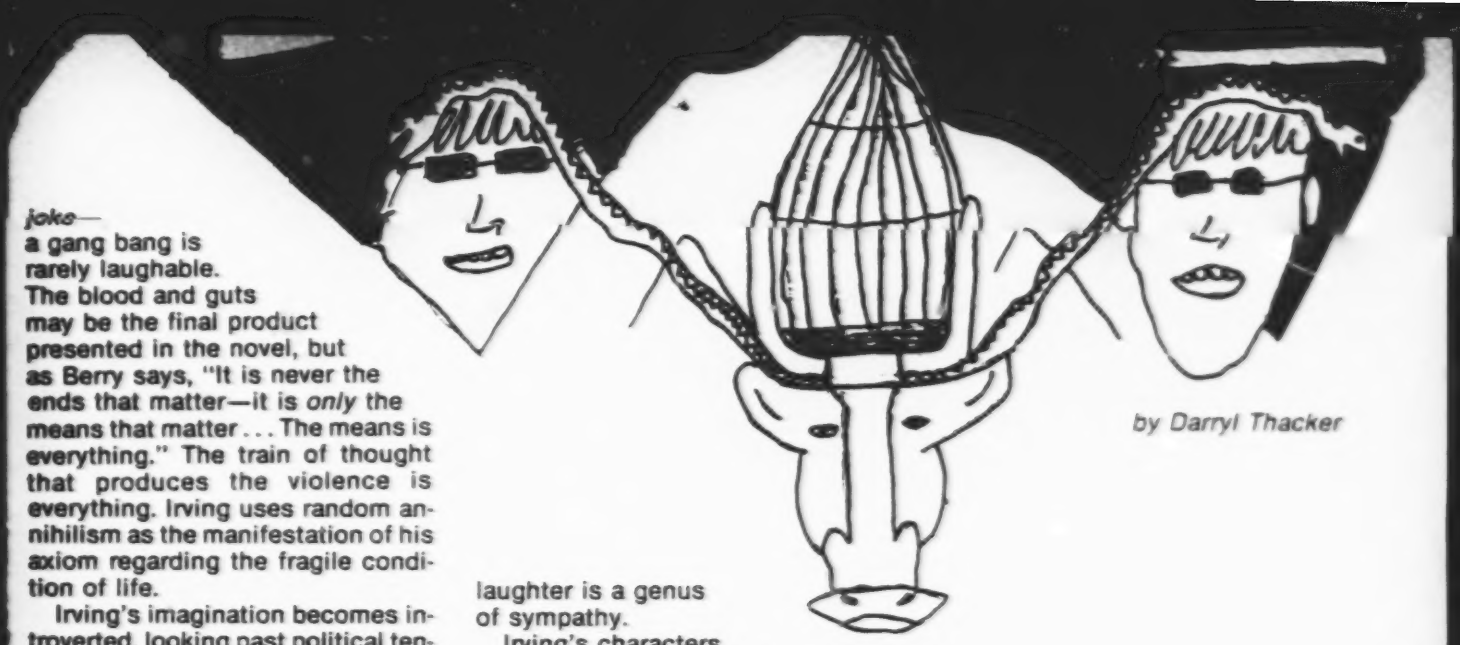
Critic Judith Moynihan has theorized that Irving's fascination with the maimed and murdered may be a reflection of the period in which he formed the preponderance of his ideas concerning writing: the turbulent Sixties, the years during which he attended college, lived in Vienna, and participated in the University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop. As John F. Kennedy was assassinated, so was Jennie Fields. As students frustrated with the Vietnam War blew up ROTC buildings, so did radicals disenchanted with society plan to blast the Vienna State Opera.

However, the one novel that Irving did write during the Sixties, *Setting Free the Bears*, was noted for having an uncanny lack of reflection of American troubles in its chapters. Henry Resnick commented in his 1969 review, "*Setting Free the Bears* simply isn't a contemporary American novel . . . Apparently the author's American identity and sensibility is missing." The events of the decade apparently had little or no effect on Irving's writing; hence, Maynihan's theory loses its plausibility.

A more convincing interpretation is offered by Richard Blake and Margaret Drabble, who assert that Irving's works characterize, not the America of the past, but the America of the present. His world is grim and unfeeling, a series of hotels from which people come and go without ever caring who is in the next room. Bleak people live without values; Frank claims religion is a form of taxidermy, and just when John seemingly finds Susie loveable, he costumes her as a bear once again, making Berry's love seem somewhat kinky. Furthermore, the real world is just as crazy, as full of zealotry, extremism, murder, lust, and laughter, so that the reader ceases questioning Irving's legitimacy. John Berry writes, "To each other we were as normal and nice as the smell of bread, we were just a family. In a family even exaggerations make perfect sense." The "madness" of Irving's technique is really not insane at all. In spite of their Jacobean gruesomeness, some of Irving's scenarios evoke an ineluctable snicker. With T.S. Garp's conception, Michael Milton's castration, and Chipper Dove's stultification, Irving has created some of the most reknowned, repeated, and morbidly rejoiced-over events in contemporary literature. As Garp says to one of his most ardent critics who regards hims a "Shithead," ". . . in regards to what's comic and what's tragic, Mrs. Poole, the world is all mixed up. For this reason I have never understood why 'serious' and 'funny' are thought to be opposites."

Hence, through bizarre violent acts, Irving creates a "serious" and "funny" world. Even in the most pitiful moments resides an element of parody, such as Jenny Field's funeral. In spite of the fact that Garp is Jenny's son, he is not allowed to attend her feminist funeral because of his gender. At the service he must present himself in drag dressed in a turquoise jumpsuit with falsies. Irving's comedy may lead the reader to wonder at times if Irving's sense of humor is offkey, but the words of Charles Nicol, it is "precisely this harmonizing of bizarre accidents with an authorial assurance that everything will come out all right (that) is Irving's most distinctive music." In spite of the untimely deaths of Mother, Egg, Iowa Bob, Jenny, and Walt, the Berry and Garp families will carry on, alongside a good smart bear.

On the other hand, Irving's violence is not merely funny, for if it were, it would be a rather cheap



by Darryl Thacker

joke—
a gang bang is
rarely laughable.
The blood and guts
may be the final product
presented in the novel, but
as Berry says, "It is never the
ends that matter—it is *only* the
means that matter . . . The means is
everything." The train of thought
that produces the violence is
everything. Irving uses random annihilism as the manifestation of his axiom regarding the fragile condition of life.

Irving's imagination becomes introverted, looking past political tension and conflict to the anxieties of personal behavior. Irving reminds us of the most concretely human themes of obligation and sacrifice, devotion and obsession, care and indifference. It is these themes that make his books true in spite of their imaginative occurrences. Irving, like Garp, "was an excessive man. He made everything baroque, he believed in exaggeration; his fiction was also extremist. But the truth in fiction has absolutely nothing to do with the verity of facts and everything to do with feasibility of emotions. As Jillsy Sloper says, "A book feels true when it feels true . . . A book's true when you can say, 'Yeah! That's just how damn people *behave* all the time!' *Then* you know it's true." Irving literally mirrors the real world, if in a several-times-removed sort of way.

The juxtaposition of truth and metaphor—particularly real sex and mock sex, real violence and mock violence—is one of Irving's chief fascinations. As Eric Korn points out, Screaming Annie's fake orgasms are factual, and the ludicrous Ellen Jamesians can and will kill. Irving shows that mockery can heal as Franny exorcises her rape by subjecting the chief perpetrator to an hysterically sinister masquerade. But it can also murder, as he eloquently demonstrates with the revolutionaries. The implicit message is that horror and joy are instrinsically joined, that comedy and death are Siamese twins. When tragic and grossly unjust events occur, Irving insists on laughter, for to him, laughter is a genus of sympathy.

Irving's characters exhibit a humor founded upon the sad awareness that life is risky, that loss is inevitable, death, omnipresent. Garp says, "We are all terminal cases." This sense of death lurking around the corner as Sorrow or the Under Toad shows in Irving's works, and dominates them; accidents, bad luck, and open windows lurk everywhere. The Garp-Berry philosophy is basic stuff: you must live willfully, purposefully, and watchfully, for if you aren't dead, you're alive. Or as the Berry family believed:

> "There are no happy endings."
>
> "Right!" cried Iowa Bob . . . Death is horrible, final, and frequently premature," Coach Bob declared.
>
> "So what?" my father said.
>
> "Right!" cried Iowa Bob. "That's the point; so what?"
>
> Thus the family maxim was that an unhappy ending did not undermine a rich and energetic life. This was based on the belief that there *were* no happy endings.

Irvin's aim is to alter our perception of life's demonic undertoad, because we don't know exactly those points at which suddenly, inexplicably, any one of us might be sucked down. Charles Nicol says that in using fantastic violence as comedy in "a formal dance around the edge of a deep well [of death]," Irving is able to put the ordinary world behind, like a burlesque *Tempest*, and weave a tapestry true, if not so much in proportions and hues, in meanings. His world is really the world according to everyone.

Once Irving has explicated his theme through the lives of his characters, the violence vanishes, leaving a somewhat serene, somewhat commonplace, somewhat boring world. Garp is dead, his son a photographer, his daughter a cancer researcher; Win Berry is blind in an illusory hotel, his son a successful agent, his daughter a pregnant movie star. . . and, as Frank would say, "It doesn't matter." The violent, dramatic conflict is over, and Irving's characters live a Gatsby existence, a tacit balance of sorrow and hope.

In concluding his books in this manner, Irving construes a fairy tale that entangles the reader in his web of fiction and, as Pearl Bell expresses, thrusts him into a world imagined "so personally that the fiction is as vivid as his personal memories," and releases him feeling refreshed and strengthened. Readers *want* to be thusly entangled. We pretend to be appalled at his vulgarity, fanaticism, and violence, but secretly we revel in it. Perhaps as a result of high technology, as Naisbitt says, perhaps as a product of inhibitions and repressions, as Frued theorizes, perhaps as an expression of our absurd world, as Ionesco writes, we are thirsty for good fiction, for truly original invention, to help us cope with a hard, unfair world. And most, if not all, of us hope that John Irving helps us with this by writing for many more months—perhaps four hundred and sixty-four.

In Memory of Roosevelt Thompson

1980 graduate of Little Rock Central High School, Roosevelt L. Thompson, winner of numerous state and national awards, a Rhodes Scholar and the 81-82 president of Yale's Calhoun College, was killed Thursday, March 22 in a car accident on the New Jersey Turnpike just outside of Newark.

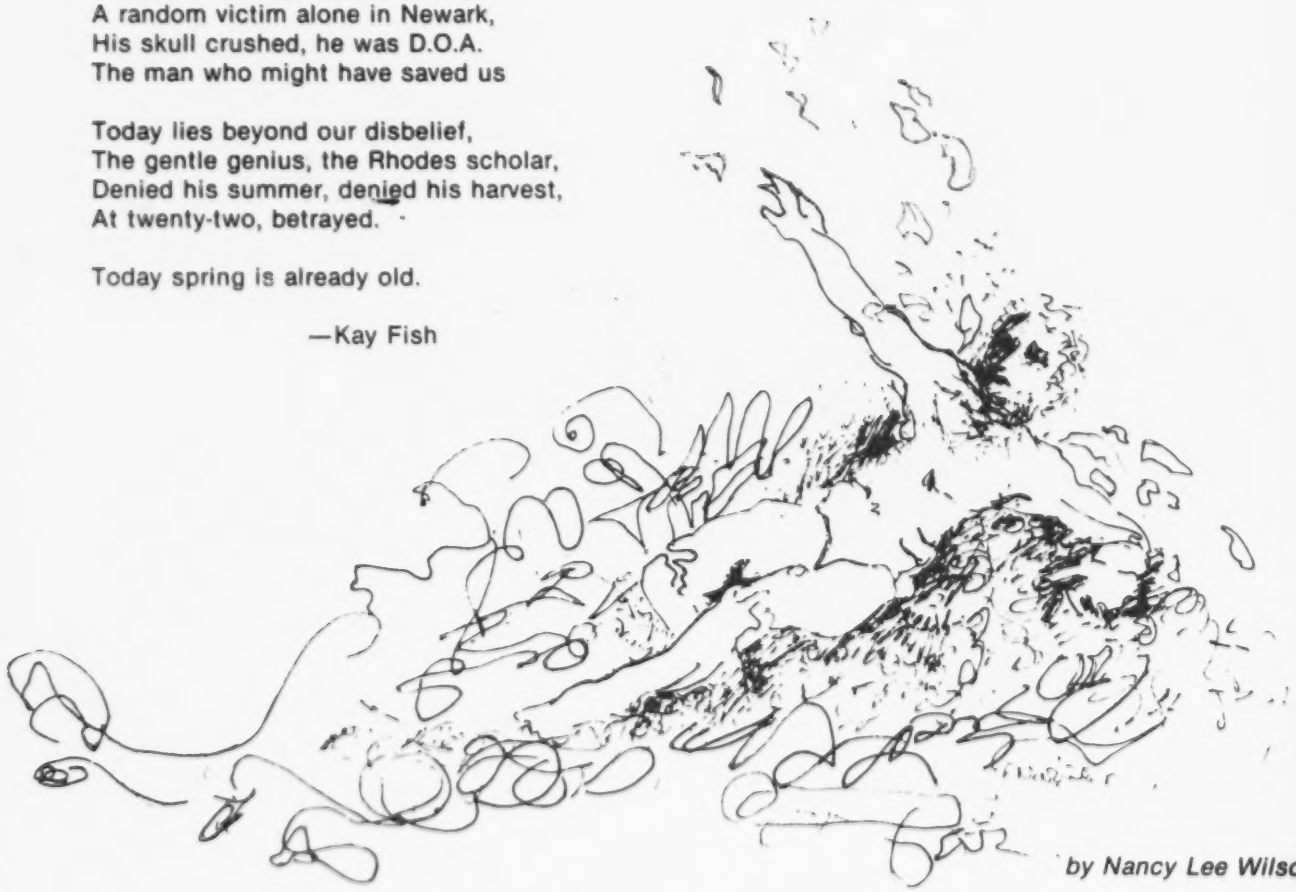
March 22, 1984

Roosevelt Thompson died today,
A random victim alone in Newark,
His skull crushed, he was D.O.A.
The man who might have saved us

Today lies beyond our disbelief,
The gentle genius, the Rhodes scholar,
Denied his summer, denied his harvest,
At twenty-two, betrayed.

Today spring is already old.

—Kay Fish



by Nancy Lee Wilson

Icarus Falling

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